Dec07
LIBRARY REDEEMER COLLEGE
777 GARNER RD E
ANCASTER ON L9K 1J4

PM# 40009999 R9375

CHRISTIAN COURIER

June 25, 2007 A Reformed Biweekly No. 2818 $2.00

Flooding.....p.15

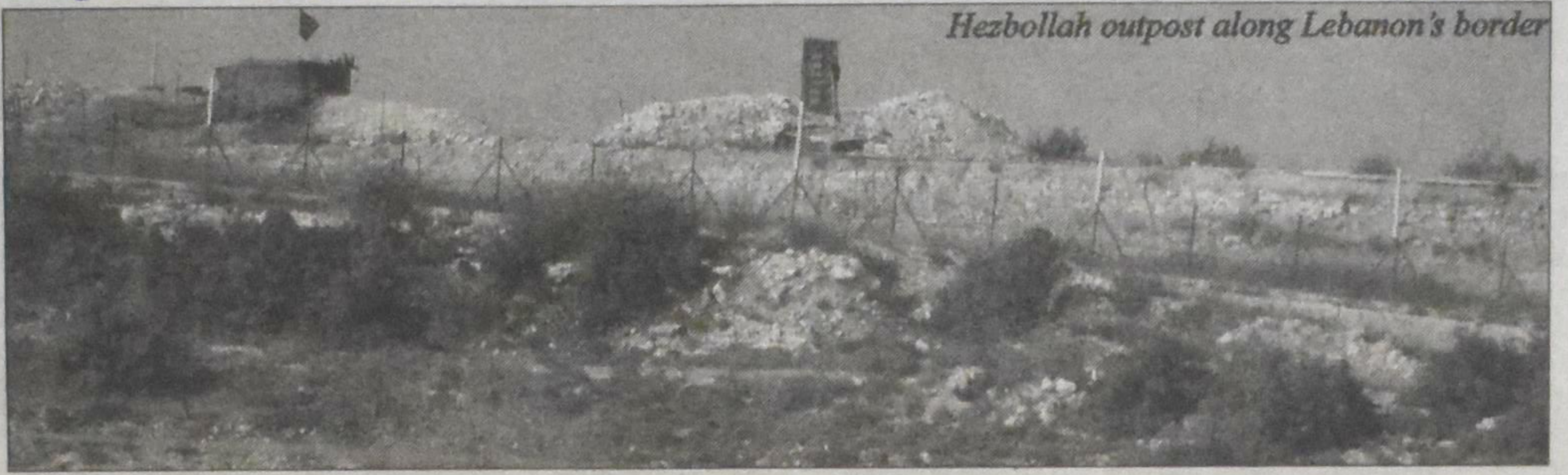
REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/.C36
JUL 0 3 2007

The dread of darknesss...p.11

# Shiites Rising: Islam's minority reaches new prominence

## Shiite Muslims are leading an 'axis of resistance' that unnerves Sunnis and challenges the US and Israel.

**Scott Peterson** | *Staff writer of* The Christian Science Monitor



*Hezbollah outpost along Lebanon's border*

"Divine victory." That's how Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah portrayed the 34-day war last summer when a few thousand Hizbullah soldiers fought Israel's vaunted military to a standstill.

Lebanon's most renowned Shiite cleric stood before a sea of yellow Hizbullah flags on Sept. 22, 2006, in a rare moment of triumph for a Shiite leader; and it reverberated throughout the Middle East.

For more than 1,300 years, Shiites have been an oppressed Islamic minority. Even today they represent just 10 to 15 percent of the world's Muslims. But Sheikh Nasrallah's clout is part of a broader rise of Shiite power. Iraq and Iran (Shiite-led states) control the world's second – and third – largest oil reserves, respectively. And Shiite leaders – Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iraq's Moqtada al-Sadr, and Nasrallah – are household names with support that crosses national and sectarian lines.

US policies, experts agree, have played a key role in this elevation. Arab Sunni leaders warn of an emerging "Shiite Crescent." But more than political and economic power, they worry about the Shiite world view.

Shiism is suffused with a culture of resistance, an identity that finds spiritual meaning in fighting injustice and through martyrdom. The result is a Shiite-led "axis of resistance" with Iran and Hizbullah at its core, versus a US-led Western alliance that includes Israel.

Is a battle for a "new" Middle East under way? Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei seems to think so. Last month, he declared that "great war of wills" is taking place. Iran standing up to the US and the West has "exploded a bomb in world politics that is a hundred times more powerful than the [atomic] bomb ... exploded in Hiroshima."

Nine hundred miles separate the front line of last summer's war in Lebanon from a vast Tehran cemetery where Iran has buried thousands of its martyrs. Relatives come regularly to reverently lay flowers and press their lips to faded portraits of soldiers who perished in the 1980-88 war with Iraq. But today, the graveyard also honors another war hero.

Countless stickers, depicting the face of Lebanon's Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, now adorn one memorial after another.

That admiration is part of the strong and growing connection between Shiite Muslims – a bond that crosses borders and unites the Muslims who are its adherents.

Months after Israeli and Hizbullah forces fought in Lebanon, would-be Iranian martyrs still dream of taking up arms alongside their distant Shiite brethren.

"We were waiting. If we were needed, we would have gone to Lebanon to defend Shiites," says Manoucher Rasoulzadeh, an Iranian car salesman, during his weekly visit to the grave of his brother-in-law, a 1987 "martyr" of the war.

Mr. Rasoulzadeh reaches for his cellphone to show off an image of Imam Hussein ibn Ali, the revered cleric who was martyred in AD 680, with his hopelessly outnumbered band of followers in battle in Karbala, Iraq.

In the pantheon of Shiite holy men, none towers higher than Imam Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad. The biggest Shiite holiday of the year, Ashura, honors that legend with reenactments, poetry, parades, and bloody self-flagellation.

"There is a saying," says Rasoulzadeh. "It is the blood of Hussein that kept Islam alive."

This year, Ashura took on new meaning when it was celebrated in January. In Lebanon, it came after the country lost more than 1,200 people to the war with Israel. In Iraq,

*See* **Shiites** *on page 2*

# Heiligendamm: beyond Kyoto or abandoning Kyoto?

**Harry der Nederlanden**

According to some newspaper accounts, at the Group of Eight (G8) conference held in Heiligendamm, Germany, at the beginning of June, Bush was busted, Harper hammered and Kyoto KOed (knocked out). Not everyone was so pessimistic; some were determined to focus on the positives: they celebrated the fact that the American president was finally made to see the error of his ways and to acknowledge the reality of global warming as a genuine threat. The German magazine *Spiegel* praised Chancellor Angela Merkel for her success in bringing Bush into the fold and committing to a multilateral – perhaps even a UN-based – approach to tackling global warming. Non-governmental organizations and environmental groups tended to heap scorn on the G8 "achievement", suggesting that little or nothing had been achieved; in fact, many suspected that Kyoto had probably been weakened, if not abandoned.

Behind the issues themselves – global warming, aid to Africa, Kosovo independence – was also the issue of authority and competence. The thousands of demonstrators who flocked to Heiligendamm to protest or influence the decisions being made there (or simply to create havoc) challenged the right of a few wealthy countries to decide the fate of the whole world. On the other hand, if the G8 leaders were to make decisions favoring their pet policies, many would be glad to see them legislate for the whole. While the G8 leaders arrogate to themselves the right to make decisions impacting the whole world, those demonstrating in the streets arrogate to themselves the power to speak on behalf of "the people" or "the poor" or the suffering planet.

The G8 meetings bring together the heads of state of the richest countries in the world – the U.S., Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Russia and Japan – but they are not usually the place where major decisions and agreements are hammered out. Much of the real work is done beforehand and afterward by lesser functionaries. The forum gives the heads of state a chance to meet each other face to face and get a feel for where the others stand. So to demand dramatic actions and resolutions from these meetings may be unrealistic.

The two main issues before the G8 were touted as climate change and aid to Africa. In the lead-up to the conference, however, the powerful heads of state threatened to be coopted by rock stars: Bono and Bob Geldof called everyone to task from Chancellor Merkel to President Bush and Prime Minister Harper for their lack of social responsibility. No doubt, the musicians are right in assuming that they have a larger following than any of them.

As the meeting began, the spotlight shifted from climate change and Africa to Russia. Putin doesn't like the idea that the U.S. wants to build bases for its missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic. He threatened to point Russia's nuclear missiles at Europe if the latter went along with the American initiative. Repeated assurances from Bush that the

*...continued on p.2*

## News

### Shiites *...continued from p.1*

*Hizbollah posters in southern Lebanon*

it became a show of defiance to the Sunni suicide bombers who continually attack Shiites' newfound power by blowing up their markets and mosques.

And in Saudi Arabia, where Shiites are a 15 percent minority, the largest public commemoration in recent memory took place. Saudi security forces once cracked down on celebrants, but this year, Saudis mourned Hussein's demise openly and praised Nasrallah in public – a sign of how the Shiite leader's popular face-off against Israel resonates even in Sunni Gulf states.

**A common fight against the West**

Last summer's war in Lebanon was cast by both sides as part of a wider struggle. On one side: Israel with the strategic support of the US. On the other: Hizbullah, backed by Iran and Syria, which along with Palestinian militants such as Hamas, form part of an increasingly cohesive "axis of resistance."

"What you gave as a gift from your resistance and jihad to the Islamic nation is beyond my capability to describe," said Iran's supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, hailing a "victory of Islam."

"You showed that through the help of God military superiority is not based on arms, weapons, fighter planes, tanks, or the Navy," Khamenei said, "but on the power of beliefs, jihad, and sacrifice."

Shiite in character, but pan-Islamic, the axis stretches from Tehran, through Syria, to Lebanon, and into the Palestinian territories. It sees the flow of money and arms – and ideological inspiration – to fight Israel from Gaza and to counter Western influence in Lebanon. It also reaches from Iran and Hizbullah, with cash and training, to allies in Iraq.

The Pentagon accuses Tehran of providing explosively formed penetrators (EFPs) and training of militants of all stripes to fight against US forces in Iraq. On top of cash given for rebuilding projects, Iran spent $64 million upgrading Shiite shrines like those in Karbala, where Imam Hussein was killed

This new axis has partly grown from the seed of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, which Americans remember for a 444-day crisis when US diplomats were held hostage. Its paint fading, the old US Embassy wall in Tehran still carries these words of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini: "We will make America face a severe defeat."

Some see Iran's full spectrum of influence in Iraq and "soft" power in Lebanon and elsewhere as a belated realization of Ayatollah Khomeini's order to "export" that revolution.

"For Hizbullah, and even for Iran, [the] play for power in the region serves an ideological aim," says Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, a Hizbullah expert at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut. "Their influence over the Palestinians does not mean they want to spread Shiite Islam in Palestine. It's to confront Israel and the US. It's to spread resistance; that is the religion they want to spread."

She notes that most Sunnis instead often follow an "accommodationist model" in dealing with authority, though indeed many hundreds of extremist jihadis have blown themselves up in attacks against both Shiite and Western targets. By contrast, there have been very few Shiite suicide attacks in recent years. But it's Shiite theology, based on sacrifice and honed by centuries as an embattled minority and cradle-to-grave indoctrination, that makes Shiites natural leaders of this axis.

"When you look at powerful actors in the region today, who is rejecting American hegemony?" asks Ms. Saad-Ghorayeb. "It's this new strategic axis: Iran, Syria, Hizbullah, and Hamas – and two of them are non-Shiite."

Hizbullah is "fully immersed in this religious ideology," says Saad-Ghorayeb. "There are people who have been raised by mothers who want them, encourage them, to sacrifice themselves. The medium is Shiite Islam – it's a very valuable mobilizing tool."

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has framed a more assertive anti-Western foreign policy, from Iran's controversial nuclear program to the capture of 14 British sailors patrolling Iraqi waters in April.

Today, he echoes Khomeini, who said years ago that "the issues of Palestine and Lebanon [are among] our main goals," and "we consider Lebanon ours."

Iran and Lebanon are "limbs of the same body," Mr. Ahmadinejad said in February, praising Hizbullah's fight last summer. "The spectacular resistance of your nation against military aggression of the Zionist regime was unique and totally unmatched," he crowed. "With its resistance, the Lebanese nation became the flag of resistance, piety, and pride for all nations."

**Shiite resistance in Iraq**

And where Iran and Lebanon lead, Shiites in Iraq – at least some of them – follow. Since modern Iraq was created in 1921, Sunnis have ruled. But the US overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the arrival of an imperfect democracy has put the 60-percent Shiite majority in control for the first time.

Mr. Hussein outlawed Shiite rites and forced thousands of Iraqis with Persian roots to leave. In 1991, his security forces slaughtered tens of thousands of Shiites after an uprising. Ayatollahs who resisted the dictator's rule were assassinated along with their families.

But even as Shiite rituals today are freely practiced, the country is being torn by severe sectarian violence that takes up to 3,700 lives in a single month. Shiites are divided, too. The largest faction takes part in the US-backed government. But the most

*See* **Shiites** *on page 19*

### Heiligendamm *...continued from p.1*

missile shield was purely defensive, that the cold war was over and that Russia was not considered an enemy did little to tone down Putin. He was clearly out to demonstrate that Russia was back as one of the major players on the international scene, and he was elbowing aside the Europeans to go head-to-head with the world's only remaining (but sagging) superpower.

Merkel was expected to forcefully push the European agenda – a mandated cap and a firm commitment to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent of 1990 levels by the year 2050. This was expected to lead to a showdown with the U.S., for Bush has never budged on his opposition to mandatory caps.

The Kyoto Protocol was almost unanimously rejected in the U.S. back in 1997 by both Democrats and Republicans. Pretty well all the politicians agreed that signing the accord would put American industry at an unfair disadvantage in competing with rising industrial nations like China and India. Moreover, it was argued, any agreement that did not include some of the largest "polluters" – and China has recently passed the U.S. as the world's number one producer of greenhouse gases – would have very little impact on cutting global warming. At the time, a large majority in the U.S. was also sceptical about the science behind global warming.

Several papers reported that the U.S. found itself isolated, as most G8 members pushed for mandatory targets, with the U.S. the lone hold-out. It turns out, however, that Japan, Russia and Canada also had misgivings about embracing more stringent mandatory caps. Countries like Canada and Australia argue that Kyoto works best in an economy like Europe's and not as well in countries whose economies are more resource based.

Europeans in general are much stronger believers in top-down government control than the Americans. Even the carbon trading scheme associated with Kyoto was conceived by Americans under the Clinton administration.

However, *The Christian Science Monitor* noted that a new generation of centrist leaders is rising in Europe who are not as prickly over toward the U.S. as the old leaders. They are more inclined to diplomacy and seem more eager to work toward consensus.

Fred Kempe, president of the Atlantic Council, pointed out on Newshour, that there are three ways to reduce carbon emissions: shrink your economy; retain your right to pollute by paying other countries (carbon credits); or change the way your economy works. The EU, he said, has been shrinking its economy (shifting dirty industry to China and elsewhere), while the U.S. aims to gradually change its economy.

I'm not sure that's a fair picture. But it is true that Europeans are very sceptical that the voluntary, gradualist approach will work. The U.S. points out that Europe, for all its rhetoric of commitment, has only managed to reduce emissions by a measly 1 percent since 1990. But that is far better than Canada and the U.S. have been able to do: they've both increased emissions by over one-quarter.

Well before the G8 talks the Bush administration has been engaged in talks with Pacific rim countries, including China, about another approach to controlling emissions "beyond Kyoto". It avoids imposing mandatory caps and focuses instead on sharing technology to reduce emissions. This approach has been successful in bringing non-Kyoto countries like China and India to the table, an absolute necessity to arrest global warming. Whether it will be effective is, of course, another question.

The agreement that came out of the G8 meeting can hardly be hailed as a new beginning. It did not bring about an agreement to mandatory caps, but it did pledge "a serious commitment" on the part of the participating countries to cut emissions by 50 percent of 1990 levels by the year 2050. The loss of mandatory caps, may perhaps be compensated for by the fact that now the U.S., the world's second biggest polluter, has been brought aboard – and by the prospect that developing countries are moving to participate.

As the *Spiegel* noted, at stake are not just environmental and development issues, but also questions relating to world government. Will sovereign nations be persuaded to cede sovereignty and power to an international body – the G8 or the U.N. perhaps? Who will determine policy: bureaucrats? environmentalists? U.N. delegates? Or will regulation of emissions be left to an inverted free-market system managed by an international carbon trading firm modeled after Wall Street?

In short, who will make decisions on behalf of the whole world? Can wealthy democratic countries be trusted to impose hardships on themselves – or even inconvenience – for the sake of the larger and long-term whole? Finally, does a global issue like climate change demand greater concentration of power in an international governing body and ever greater surrender of local and national control? How can the nations of the world be made to act in concert on a matter of great import to them all?

## News

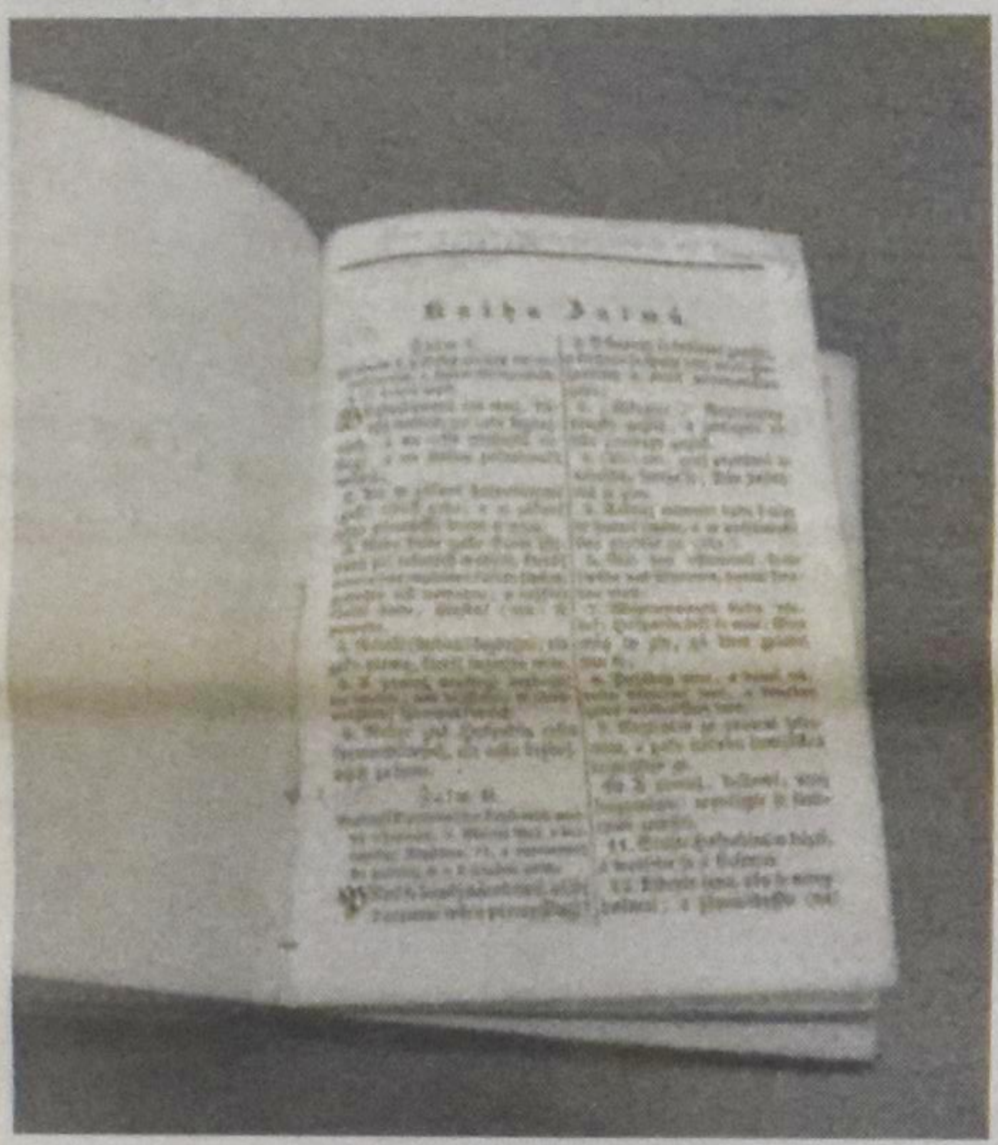
# *Psalms in wartime*

**Principalities & Powers**

**David T. Koyzis**

As a lifelong aficionado of old books, I have made a point of visiting the local antiquarian bookshops while traveling. During a visit to Prague in what was then still called Czechoslovakia in November 1976, I found more than one such shop and purchased a number of volumes dating from the 19th century. One of these was a metrical psalter and hymnal published in 1900.

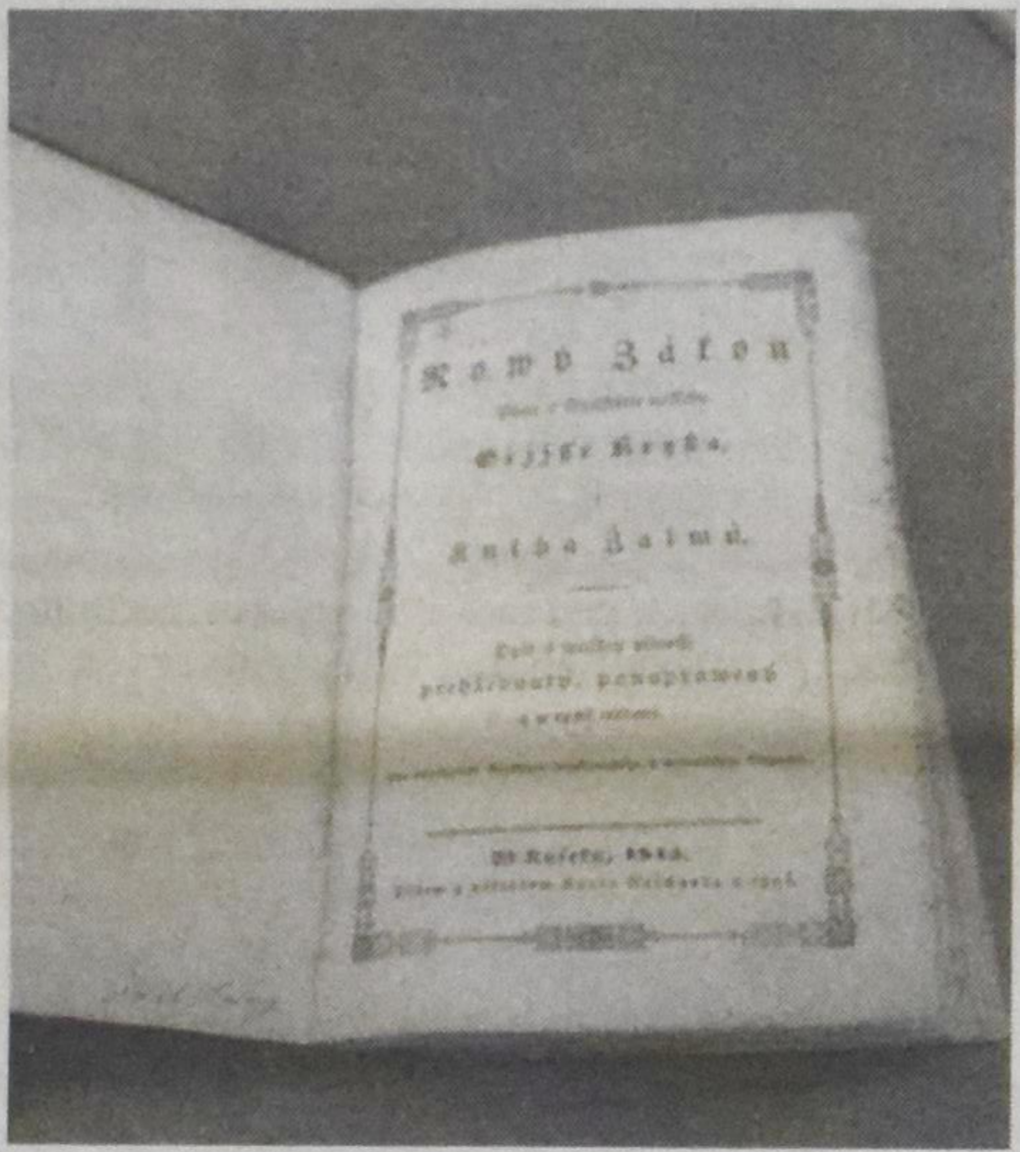
Another volume dates from 1845 and contains the New Testament and Psalms translated into the Czech language. (Years later I was struck by the irony of my having taken a Bible *out* of a communist country!) The print is in the old German blackletter and the text uses an older spelling. The frontispiece indicates that this edition was intended for use by 'Evangelical Christians of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions,' i.e., by Lutheran and Reformed Christians.



The Psalms are of special interest to me, especially the various ways they are used in the course of the liturgy or by individual believers at prayer. Last month, while paging through this section, I discovered something I hadn't before noticed. The owner of this volume at the beginning of the 20th century, named Carl (or Karel) Lány, read through the Psalms at the pace of approximately one psalm per day (except for Psalm 119), taking time to mark the date at the top of each. He started with Psalm 1 on '1./8.', i.e., 1 August 1914, and continued until he read Psalm 150 on '18./I. 1915', i.e., 18 January 1915.

The timing may not have been incidental. Lány lived in Austria-Hungary, whose heir to the throne had been assassinated in Sarajevo on 28 June. Tensions had mounted after that, with Austria-Hungary issuing an ultimatum to Serbia on 23 July and declaring war five days later. This quickly brought the other European powers onside of either Austria or Serbia, with battles beginning and intensifying into the autumn and winter months. It seems rather likely that Lány – apparently a Lutheran or Reformed Christian living in the predominantly Catholic Czech provinces – turned to the Psalms as the Great War was breaking out.

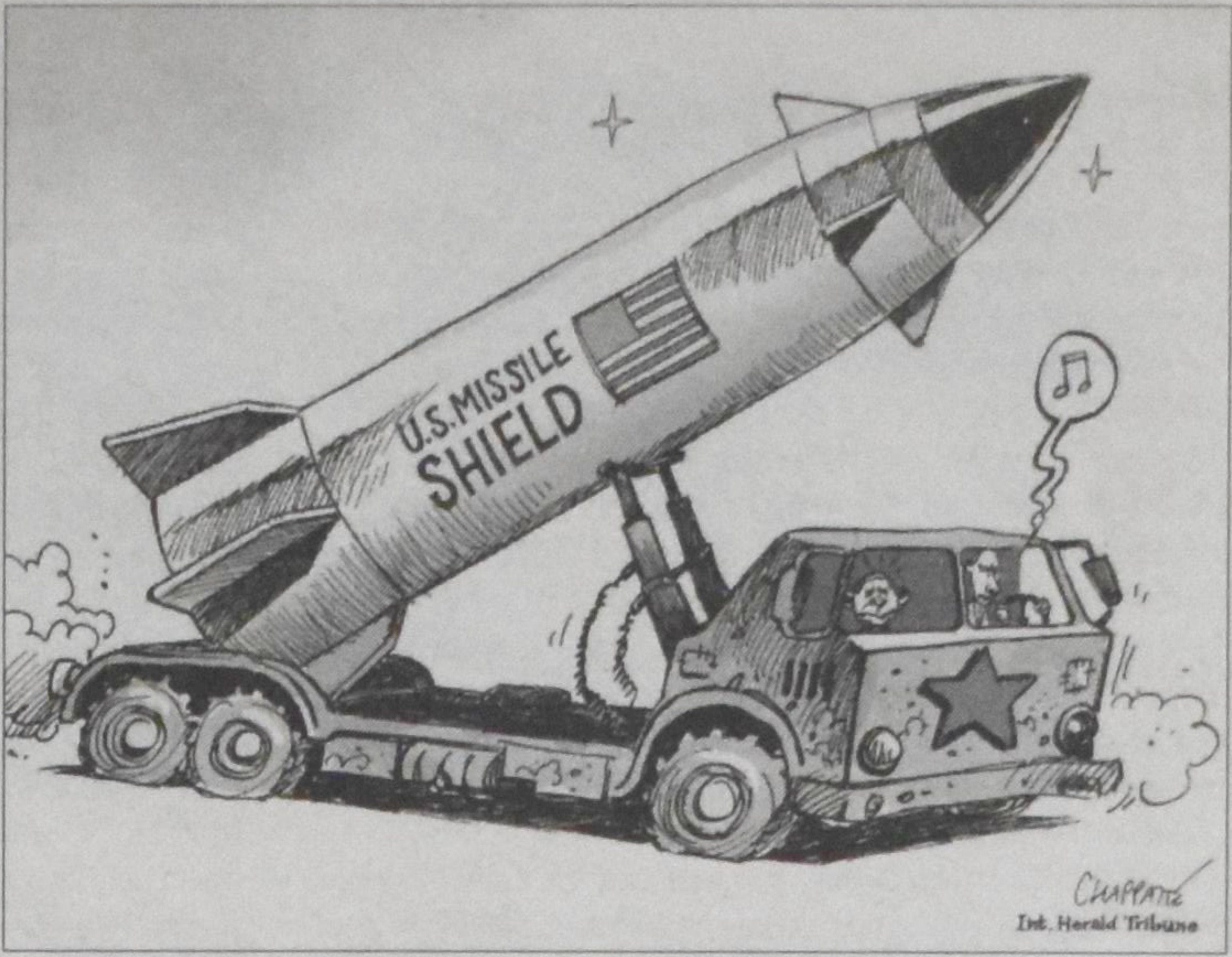
Perhaps he had sons of conscription age and was concerned for their safety as his country went to war. As a member of a religious minority (and, it seems, with Hungarian roots), he may have sensed how fragile his country's unity really was at the outset of what proved to be the defining event of the 20th century. One can only imagine the subsequent history of this little book. It is possible that Lány lived into the nazi and communist eras, when atheistic régimes made it costly to maintain a public witness to the faith. After Lány's death, the volume may have passed down to his children and grandchildren who were perhaps less appreciative of its significance, selling it to an antiquarian bookseller, whence it came into my hands three decades ago. Of course this can only be conjecture.



One thing, however, is certain. The day after the Battle of Tannenberg broke out to the north between Germany and Russia, Lány read these words from Psalm 27:3-5:

Though a host encamp against me,
  my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
  yet I will be confident.
One thing have I asked of the LORD,
  that will I seek after;
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
  all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the LORD,
  and to inquire in his temple.
For he will hide me in his shelter
  in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent,
  he will set me high upon a rock.

*David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is the author of the award-winning* Political Visions and Illusions *(InterVarsity Press). His blog can be found at:* <http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/>.




**Martinair**

*49 years in the air*

FROM ONLY

**$499**

All rates shown in CAD

| TORONTO Departure Dates (Mon., Tue., & Sat.) | RETURN FARE ADULT | SENIOR FARE* YOUTH FARE | CHILD FARE** |
|---|---|---|---|
| JUNE 02, 04, 05, 09 | 799 | 749 | 599 |
| JUNE 11, 12, 16, 18, 19 | 899 | 849 | 699 |
| JUNE 23, 25, 26, 30 | 999 | 949 | 799 |
| JULY 02, 03, 07, 09, 10, 14 | 999 | 949 | 799 |
| JULY 16, 17, 21, 23, 24, 28, 30, 31 | 999 | 949 | 799 |
| AUG 04, 06, 07, 11 | 999 | 949 | 799 |
| AUG 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28 | 959 | 909 | 759 |
| SEP 01, 03, 04, 08, 10, 11 | 899 | 849 | 699 |
| SEP 15, 17, 18, 22, 24, 25, 29 | 799 | 749 | 599 |
| OCT 01, 02, 06, 08, 09, 13 | 699 | 649 | 499 |
| OCT 15, 16, 20, 22, 23 | 499 | 499 | 499 |
| OCTOBER 27 (WESTBOUND ONLY) | | | |

**ADDITIONAL CHARGES:**
Airport Taxes/Fees: **CAD 198**
*Senior age 60+ (with exact D.O.B.)
*Youth: ages 15-25 (with exact D.O.B.)
****Children:** ages 2-14 on outbound sector.

**Traffic Days:** Day 01 (Mon.); Day 02 (Tues.); Day 06 (Sat.)

**Infant:** No charge in economy (NO seat), under 2 years on return date. Full child fare + upgrade in Comfort Class.

**Comfort Class – 10% extra legroom – only $79 extra per sector flight**

**Book with your favourite travel agent!**

**VERSTRAETE TRAVEL & CRUISES**

St.Catharines office (905) 934-4414 or 1-800-405-6088

Aurora office (416) 969-8100 or 1-800-565-9267

Visit our website: **www.verstraetetravel.com**

**ESCORTED TOURS by EARL CLINT**

*Philadelphia-Lancaster *Nova Scotia *Newfoundland
*Chicago * New York. For details and dates visit our website
or **contact the St.Catharines office**

**ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE NEXT MARKET CORRECTION?**

How will your portfolio stand up in the next bear market?

Are you looking for a reasonable rate of return without sticking your neck out?

Do you have/want **PEACE OF MIND** over your finances?

For a no obligation, free assessment of your portfolio, Call me now, 24 hrs at
**1-800-541-0977** ext. 209 (downtown office)

**CLARENCE WEIMA CFP**
**Executive Financial Consultant**
**1-800-488-9817** (home)
**clarence.weima@investorsgroup.com**

**The Plan** by **Investors Group™**
Investors Group Financial Services Inc.

™ Trademarks owned by Investors Group Inc. and licensed to its affiliated corporations.

## Guest editorial

# Were the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN) Kuyperian?

**Bert den Boggende**

Gerry Gerrits' review of Agnes Amelink's recent book Gereformeerden overzee (*CC*, May 28) raises again the issue to what extent the GKN and the CRC in Canada were/are Kuyperian. I say again, for in Amelink's book *De gereformeerden* (2001) in the Netherlands as well as in her series about them on this continent, which appeared some years ago in the Dutch newspaper Trouw, she glossed over this important issue. Perhaps the issue may also be formulated as "When did Kuyper become a Kuyperian?" In answering this question perhaps some of the mythology surrounding the Gereformeerden both in the Netherlands and in Canada will be exposed. In order to do so it is necessary to review some Dutch church history.

The Synod of Dordt may have caused the expulsion of the Remonstrants from the semi-state church Gereformeerde Kerk (it was a privileged church and never a state church, as is often alleged) after 1618, but that did not mean that there were no significant differences within the "purified" church. Many, including the leading theologian Gijsbertus Voetius, thought that the church had not been purified enough. They favoured a further, pietist reformation (Dutch: Nadere Reformatie). Often these pietists ("precisians") kept a very strict Sunday observance and held to a literal approach to Scripture in contrast to the followers of Cocceius ("stretchers"; Dutch: rekkelijken). Dissatisfied with the teachings of the church, these pietists came together in conventicles, akin to today's house churches. (See further Jonathan Israel, The Dutch Republic, 1995), These pietists were the ancestors of both the Afscheiding in 1834 and the Kuyperian Doleantie of 1886. In fact their conventicles continued into the twentieth century. When my father, born in 1906, was a child, my Gereformeerde grandfather, born in 1856, sometimes took him along to these gatherings. Unfortunately, my father never wanted to discuss this – perhaps it contributed to the fact that he never became a confessing church member. The continuity of these conventicles suggests that no sharp distinction should be drawn between those who left the Reformed Church in 1834 and in 1886.

After the French-Napoleonic period, during which the semi-state church Gereformeerde Kerk lost its privileges and education was reorganized, King William I wanted to centralize the newly named Hervormde Kerk and continue the reorganization of education. His interference in both led to the separation of 1834. The badly treated separatists were, however, not unified. This is even apparent in the different patterns of emigration to the United States and the formation of the CRC, or to mention only two names, Scholte and Van Raalte. In the Netherlands some accepted King William's conditions about their name, calling themselves Christian Separate Churches (Christelijke Afgecheidene Kerken), while others refused those conditions, calling themselves Gereformeerden onder het Kruis (Reformed under the Cross, namely of oppression). In 1869 they united as the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk (CGK), the mother church of the Free Reformed Church in Canada....

*Me? A Kuyperian? Afschuwelijk!*

By that time the pietists who had remained in the Hervormde Kerk had found a new leader, Abraham Kuyper. Church order and education led to a new separation in 1886, the Doleantie ("mourning"). Since there was little difference between the Kuyperian separatists and the CGK they united in 1892, forming the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN), although a minority continued as the CGK. The new denomination went back to the seventeenth-century church order and emphasized the triadic connection of church-home-school. In spite of the unified core ideas this new denomination was not unified. In some places there was a difference between A and B Gereformeerden, depending on the original separation, and between Christian Schools and Schools with the Bible, depending on the willingness to cooperate with other denominations.

Here it is necessary to return to the question, "When did Kuyper become a Kuyperian?" While Kuyper himself was involved in all kinds of non-church activities, ranging from editor of newspapers to politician, he really had not completed his world-and-life view when he separated in 1886 or unified in 1892. That did not come until he gave his now famous Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1898. In other words, the recently formed GKN was not fully Kuyperian in the sense of these lectures. Like my grandfather, many continued as Gereformeerde pietists, who accepted the triad but often not much more. Even the fuller Kuyperian view experienced stagnation a generation after its formulation, as Ben van Kaam indicated in 1964 in Parade der Mannenbroeders. At my young peoples' society as well as at my Gereformeerde teachers' college in the early 1960s Kuyper's views were never discussed.

As the history of early Gereformeerde immigrants in Canada suggests, even the triad was not so strong. Before WWII some members of First Hamilton CRC wanted a Christian school as soon as possible, while others wanted to postpone such a school until they had been economically settled. In Holland Marsh, in 1943, and Lacombe, in 1945, the soon-as-possible school groups were able to establish schools before the new wave of Dutch immigrants arrived. Tymen Hofman's The Canadian Story of the CRC (2004) as well as my own research indicate that these early immigrants did not have much of the full Kuyperian world-and-life view. Hofman's story suggests that many post-WWII immigrants developed Christian (Kuyperian) organizations, but there is evidence enough to indicate that many were not interested in those organizations. As CRC synod reports make clear, many could not even bother to support Christian schools, never mind such organizations as the CLAC, CPJ or the Institute for Christian Studies. The Canadian CRC may have been more influenced by Kuyper than its American counterpart, but much may have come via Calvin College rather than from the Netherlands directly. The diversity within the GKN as well as the loss of enthusiasm and often ignorance of the Kuyperian world-and-life view should help explain the frequent differences within the Canadian CRC. Amelink's view is too simplistic both for the Gereformeerden in the Netherlands and in Canada. Gerry Gerrits suggests an important difference between 1834 and 1886, but that is based on Amelink's inadequate understanding and research.

**Christian Courier**

Founded in 1945

***An independent biweekly that seeks to: report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective; provide contact for the Christian community.***

**EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF**

**Editor**: Harry der Nederlanden editor@christiancourier.ca
**Circulation**: Rose der Nederlanden rose@christiancourier.ca
**Accounts/Advertising Manager**: Ineke Medcalf-Strayer ads@christiancourier.ca

The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by *Christian Courier* or the publisher. Please contact circulation if you cannot afford the subscription price but want to receive *Christian Courier*.

**Christian Courier**
**5 Joanna Drive, St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1**
**Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838**
**Fax: (905) 682-8313; Web site: www.christiancourier.ca**
Publications Mail Registration No. 09375

We acknowledge the assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs. Canada

**Here is one of the planks of the Ontario Conservative Party platform made public on the June 10 weekend**

Take action to bring faith-based schools into the public system.

This is a question of fairness. John Tory and the PC Party believe that we need to achieve more effective integration of Ontario's increasingly diverse student population into the mainstream of our province. That's why we are committed to creating an opportunity for non-Catholic, faith-based schools to choose to join our publicly funded education system the same way Catholic schools have already done. Our policy will apply only to faith-based schools and we believe that the best results would be achieved through direct funding rather than through tax credits.

With this direct public funding will come strict criteria and accountability requirements. These criteria will include the expectation that participating schools:

• fully incorporate the complete requirements of Ontario's common curriculum, just as in the Catholic system;

• participate in Ontario's standardized testing program and agree to published results; and

• appropriately address teacher credentialing.

[I have seen no rationale for why the Conservatives opted for this alternative rather than tax credits or charter schools. Even the schools presently under Ontario's system often complain that they feel smothered.]

After shivering through several winters in our present quarters, we're moving to a place with better insulation. Our next issue will be in three weeks – July 16.

Here's our new address:
Christian Courier
5 Joanna Drive
St Catharines ON L2N 1V1
Phone numbers and e-mail addresses will remain the same.

**Celebration**

# What awaits the CRC: grace or grasshoppers?

## Niagara churches celebrate the anniversary of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

**Bert Witvoet**

*The Christian Reformed Church in North America is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. More than 30 regional worship events are being held throughout the United States and Canada. The largest one, held on June 10, saw the participation of some 250 Great Lakes congregations in the Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as CRC Synod 2007 officially observed the anniversary. The overall theme of all these celebrations is "Grace Through Every Generation." This article focuses on just one of these regional worship events, namely, the one held by 13 Niagara region Christian Reformed congregations.*

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. – One thousand worshipers crowded into the Bethany Community Church facility on the outskirts of this city on June 3. To the singing of the stately hymn "The Church's One Foundation," representatives of the 13 Niagara CRC congregations carried in liturgical banners. A little later, Gems and Pioneer girls swirled ribbons as the congregants enthusiastically sang "These Are the Days of Elijah." The combined choirs of Beacon Christian and Smithville Christian high schools sang about a harvest that has few workers, "so send me, Lord."

### Historical review

Since each regional worship event was to focus on three phases – remembering, rejoicing and rededicating – retired pastor Henry Eshuis (Bethany CRC in Fenwick) took the audience on a historical journey, beginning with a protest movement in 19th century Holland against liberal forces in the Reformed state church. Teachers Willem Bilderdijk and Isaac Da Costa influenced theology students Hendrik de Cock, Hendrik Scholte and Anthony Brummelkamp, who as pastors eventually seceded from the Reformed Church (*Afscheiding* – 1834). Hendrik Scholte and Albertus van Raalte were the spiritual leaders who accompanied Seceders in their emigration to the United States.

Van Raalte's group settled near what was later called Holland, Michigan. After a brief time within the Reformed Church of North America, Van Raalte's churches left that denomination in 1857 to form the Christian Reformed Church. The struggle against perceived liberalism in the Netherlands continued in North America, as the new immigrants objected to the singing of hymns, open communion, lodge membership and lack of doctrinal preaching. Pastor Eshuis left little doubt that he was not happy with the contribution our ancestors have made to "the scandal" of a divided Church of Christ.

He traced other tensions experienced by the Christian Reformed Church since its inception: the influx of later immigrants who had been influenced by Abraham Kuyper's concept of the lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life (*Doleantie* – 1886); the gradual switch from Dutch to English in worship services and church education; the struggle over the positive role of science in education, over "Common Grace," a dispute that caused Grand Rapids theologian Herman Hoeksema to leave the CRC in the 1920s and help form the Protestant Reformed Church; the struggle over women in ecclesiastical office, which led to a secession by "Orthodox" churches.

Other issues loom on the horizon, said Eshuis. But he ended on a positive note. The God who said, "I am with you till the end of the age" has been and will be faithful. "We may even reunite with fellow Christians from whom we have been separated for a long time." He pointed to the ethnic variety in the Christian Reformed denomination as a sign of God's blessing: "Besides people of Dutch extraction we have Korean, Navaho, Asian, French, Hispanic and African congregations." At the end of his speech, Eshuis stabbed the air with his cane, as he spoke with determination, "Say it with me, "Soli Deo Gloria!"

*Bruce Adema*

*Rev. Henry Eshuis*

### Confession of sins

Recently installed pastor Rudy Ouwehand (Rehoboth CRC, Niagara Falls) led the people through a time of confession, appropriately following the review of a flawed history of the church. The confession was, nevertheless, based on the Apostle Paul's assurance that "neither height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus." Heather Kikkert (Mountainview CRC, Grimsby) and pastor Duane Vanderlaan (Jubilee CRC, St. Catharines) introduced the assurance of pardon with a moving duet rendition of "Wonderful, Merciful Saviour." And what else could follow the assurance but the Apostle's Creed with its faith-building expression of what the Church of Christ believes throughout the ages.

### Is there a future?

Bruce Adema, Director of Canadian Ministries, delivered the main message of the service: "Renewal at 150." Taking his cue from Psalm 103, "As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the

*See* **Grace** *on page7*

**Christian Courier**

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association

**Canada Mail:**
PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40009999
REGISTRATION NO. 9375
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO
CHRISTIAN COURIER
5 JOANNA DRIVE
ST CATHARINES ON L2N 1V1
email: **subscriptions@christiancourier.ca**

**U.S. Mail:**
Christian Courier
(USPS 518-090)
Second-class postage paid at Lewiston NY
Postmaster: send address changes to: Christian Courier, Box 110 Lewiston NY 14092

| Subscriptions: | Canada (G.S.T. incl.) | USA | Overseas |
|---|---|---|---|
| one yr. (25 issues) | $44.00 | $40.00 US | $85.00 |
| two yrs. (50 issues) | $80.00 | $75.00 US | |

**Advertising deadlines**: display and classified advertising: Tuesday, 9 a.m. (13 days before publication date) See classified pages or web site **www.christiancourier** for more details.
(ISSN 1192-3415) Published biweekly on Mondays.

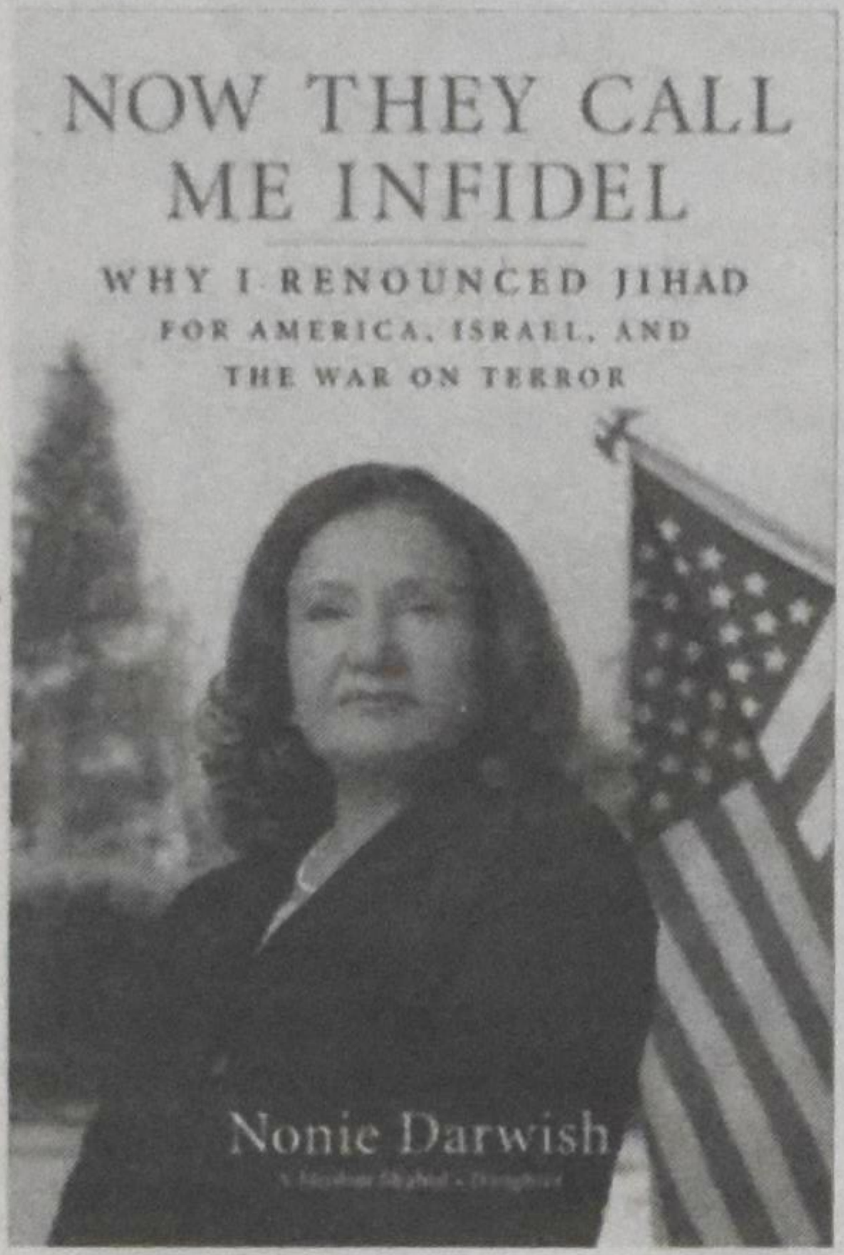
**Address all correspondence to**: 5 Joanna Dr, St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1
Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838, or fax: 905-682-8313
e-mail: Advertising: ads@christiancourier.ca
Subscriptions: subscriptions@christiancourier.ca

**PRINTED IN CANADA**

Review

# Resisting a culture of hatred

**Now They Call me Infidel: Why I Renounced Jihad for America, Israel, and the War on Terror**
by Nonie Darwish.
Sentinel, Penguin Books, 2006, 258 pp. $30




*Many immigrants come to this great nation in search of material gain, which is fine; however, the biggest prize I gained was my religious freedom and learning to love. For me it was nothing short of cataclysmic. I had turned from a culture of hatred to one of love.* (p.161)

**Reviewed by Harry Antonides**

Nonie Darwish, who lived the first 30 years of her life in Egypt and immigrated to America in 1978, is supremely suited to write about the stark difference between the free West and the Islam-ruled Middle East.

Born into an Egyptian Muslim family, she at first tried very hard to be a good Muslim believer. However, blessed with an inquisitive mind and a strong will, she found that increasingly difficult and then decided to break with her culture and religion. She now is an American citizen who has dedicated her life to publicly extolling the freedom and openness of America and the right of Israel to live in peace. This book is a compelling account of the author's journey from Islam to Christianity, in parallel with her move from Egypt to America.

### A world split apart

Her family belonged to the middle-upper class of Egypt since her father, Colonel Mustafa Hafez, was a high-ranking officer in the Egyptian army. When she was five years old, her family moved to Gaza where her father was appointed by the Nasser government to head the clandestine operations against Israel. Nonie attended a school where students were drilled to hate Jews as despicable people who had stolen their land and were the cause of all the troubles in the Arab world, and therefore had to be destroyed.

In 1956, when she was eight years old, her father was killed by the Israelis, and the relatively carefree life of the family came to an abrupt end. She was heart-stricken when she lost her father and was not comforted with the adults' assurances that he had a guaranteed place in heaven because he had died as a martyr.

Her mother, who was now left to care for four daughters and a son, at first received a generous government pension. Later that was severely reduced, and she experienced the loneliness and hardship that is the lot of all widows in Islamic countries.

The family moved to Cairo, where the girls attended a British Roman Catholic school run by English nuns. Before long, President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized all the private schools, and the English, French and German educators left the country. Nonie considered herself fortunate to have had the benefit of English education in the private schools, including the American University in Cairo, before they were all shut down.

She experienced her schooling in the foreign-led schools and the surrounding culture, where jihad against the infidels was glorified, as living in two worlds. She relates how in the Catholic school, where half the students were Muslims, the latter would spend part of the afternoon with an Islamic teacher who taught them the Koran and told them how Allah led Muhammad in his victorious battles against the infidels. And then the Muslim students returned to their regular classes, she writes, "where the kind, sweet, 'infidel' nuns resumed their instruction."

After the overthrow of King Farouk in 1952, President Nasser ruled the country until 1970. He was determined to establish a strong pan-Arab coalition and considered Israel the great obstacle to the realization of that ambition. The 1956 and 1967 wars were disastrous for Egypt, but the main preoccupation of the Nasser-led government remained the elimination of Israel.

That changed after the death of Nasser in 1970, when President Anwar Sadat pursued a different policy and in 1978 took the courageous step to sign a peace agreement with Israel. In response, Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, territory that Israel had made over from an empty stretch of sand to a thriving modern economy with an infrastructure, oil wells and modern hotels on the beautiful Red Sea and Mediterranean beaches. But the fanatical Muslim Brotherhood, who considered the Sadat-brokered peace treaty with Israel an act of treason, assassinated him in October 1981.

### A ticking time bomb

Though she was spared the hardship of the poor and illiterate, Darwish experienced firsthand the suffocating restrictions and demands on women in an Islamic country. With the support of her mother she obtained an excellent education and escaped the fate of an arranged marriage that would have robbed her of the little freedoms she still enjoyed.

However, she deeply resented the suffocating control over women's lives by the religious laws and taboos that condemned women to a life of servitude and isolation. All spontaneous contacts between boys and girls, men and women, were forbidden, and the prying eyes of neighbours and family members were everywhere to ensure that women uphold the "honour"of the family. Darwish writes that as a young woman she felt "locked into a box, living to satisfy someone else's criteria of morality and social behavior. I was only to befriend Egyptians, preferably Muslims and women like me, and even those friendships presented problems."

Her first job out of university was to serve as editor, translator and censor at the state-owned Middle East News Agency, where she discovered that all information was closely controlled. At the same time she was fortunate that her work took her to the major Western cities, where she saw a very different world than the one presented in the Egyptian media.

She became increasingly aware of the gap between what the media were allowed to report and the reality within Egypt as well as in the outside world. The relative openness to the United States at the time of President Nixon's visit in 1972 yielded to a culture of hatred toward the "Great Satan." Darwish attributed that to the influence of Islamists and Arab secular leftists who "bombarded the Arab street with misinformation, propaganda, and outright lies." She writes that even the Western media played along with this falsehood because it did not want to run the risk of being ousted from the country. But the lies and the incessant drumbeat of hatred toward the outside world created the right climate for the spread of fundamentalism and extremism in Egypt.

Darwish began to despair of the future of Egypt because of the control over the lives of all citizens, the culture of jihad, the hatred, especially toward Israel, and the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. She feared that the Middle East was becoming a ticking time bomb ready to explode any time.

### A new start

In November 1978, Darwish emigrated to America, where she married her fiancé who had preceded her. What made a deep impression on her was the openness, freedom and real tolerance of the American people. She quickly found a job as a secretary in a small business owned by a Jew, the very person whom she was taught from childhood to hate as an enemy to be destroyed.

Darwish is convinced that we will never understand the culture she left behind unless we realize how different the Arabic mindset is from the openness, freedom and tolerance she experienced in America. For example, she writes that saving face is a very strong motivation for Arabs, and lying is seen as a virtue if that is required to save face.

On the other hand, the Western notion of honesty, in the Arabs' understanding is not a virtue at all but an opportunity to take advantage of the naïve Westerners. Darwish is convinced that "the whole issue of truthfulness and honesty in Arab culture is a multilayered mystery to most of the Western world and is integral to the misunderstandings between our cultures." She explains:

*During my first two years in America, my sudden exposure to the freedom of religion and social and racial equality in America made me realize to what degree Muslim society oppressed, shamed, and manipulated its citizens. It was crippling to a healthy life.... Moving to America was like being catapulted to another time in history. America for me was not just a place for making money, having a job, a house, and car, it was a place for becoming a human being.*

Much to her disappointment, during the 1980s she began to notice that the radical version of Islamic culture she had left behind was beginning to take root right here in America. In the meantime, Darwish had to face the fact that though she still considered herself to be a Muslim, her attachment to that religion was a mere formality without any depth.

Her attempts to connect with other Muslims and the mosque were disappointing. The rudeness and fanaticism put her off – the very things she had escaped from – she encountered when visiting a mosque. But more importantly, she began to question the very essence of Islam, especially after she heard the same sort of anti-American and anti-Israel propaganda she had heard in Egypt.

### Growing fanaticism

She discovered to her dismay that many mosques in America are supported by Saudi-Arabian money and led by imams who preach the fanatical Wahabi branch of Islam. Their message was that Muslims should not assimilate into the American culture but that they should strive to change America into an Islamic country, a message that was summarized by Omar Ahmed, co-founder of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), as follows:

*Those who stay in America should be open to society without melting, keeping Mosques open so anyone can come and learn about Islam. If you choose to live here, you have a responsibility to deliver the message of Islam.... Islam isn't in America to be equal to any other faiths, but to become dominant. The Koran, the Muslim book of scripture, should be the highest authority in America, and Islam the only accepted religion on earth.*

*See* **Resisting a Culture** *on page 17*

## Stewardship

*150th music leaders*

**Grace** *continued from page 5*

field," he compared the age of the Christian Reformed Church to a human life span. Adema concluded that the CRC is "pretty old." He spoke of the denomination as a house in which live brothers and sisters who have family stories to tell. "Most of the family stories we tell are good stories," he said. "We would rather not tell the bad ones."

He recited some of the good stories: churches popping out of the ground after World War II, the work of Christian organizations and schools, missionary activity (Did you know that there are more Christian Reformed churches in Nigeria than in all of North America?), CRWRC and its relief work, ministry with Aboriginal peoples.

He mentioned an incident that took place when he attended a meeting of the Canadian Council of Churches with government representatives. When Adema had a question to ask of the politicians, and after he had introduced himself as Director of Canadian Ministries of the Christian Reformed, he was briefly interrupted by one of the politicians, who said in the presence of all the other representatives from other denominations, "Whenever a Christian Reformed person addresses politicians, we listen, because your work is well articulated, carefully researched and helpful. You guys do this better than anyone else."

By this time the heads of Adema's audience were beginning to swell a little. But then Adema took the listeners down a few pegs when he pointed out that Christian Reformed people also have reasons to be ashamed. He mentioned instances of abuse of power by leaders, lack of pastoral care that allowed people to feel unappreciated, and not taking the trouble to listen to each other in order to avoid schisms. "As a family, we have good and bad stories to tell," he said. Adema pointed out that Psalm 103 comforts us when we read that our God is the one "who forgives all your sins, heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." But we're not yet the people we're meant to be, he added.

Adema ended by asking the question, "Is there hope for us?" In other words, will the Christian Reformed Church meet the fate of the grass and the flowers in Psalm 103? He illustrated the point that a long life is not the same as a healthy life by telling the mythical story of the goddess Aurora who asked Zeus to give her mortal lover Tithonis eternal life but forgot to ask for eternal youth as well. Zeus granted her request, but as Tithonis continued to live, he aged and degenerated until he was reduced to a heap of flesh without bones. When the goddess realized her mistake, she asked Zeus to undo her request, but he did not or could not undo his earlier decision to grant eternal life. So for some strange reason, unknown apparently to Adema, Zeus turned Tithonis into a grasshopper.

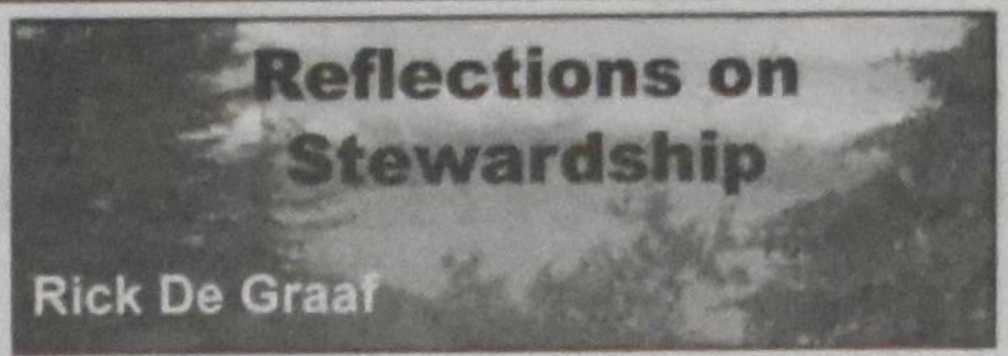
With the image of a grasshopper hanging over the heads of his audience, Adema asked whether, as the CRC ages, it will have a real future. "There is no future, if we think that what has been done and what lies ahead depends on ourselves. Only when we are in step with the Holy Spirit will the CRC soar into the future."

But Adema did not leave his audience hanging with a conditional statement. Instead he expressed his belief that the CRC *will* thrive: "We are the Church of the Lord; he has given his Spirit to us. The Lord our God will not allow the gates of hell to prevail against the church."

The service ended with a statement of rededication, as Pastor Andrew Beunk (Fruitland CRC) read from Hebrews 12: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders, and the sin that easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

The offering during this service was directed towards the establishment of a church plant in nearby Thorold. During this offering, a slide presentation showed pictures and notes on each of the Christian Reformed Churches in Classis Niagara. Elderly and beloved retired "Yankee" pastor Jim Van Weelden (Mountainview CRC, Grimsby), who has served churches in Canada for over 30 years, pronounced the blessing, after which a quickly assembled Classis Niagara choir sang the well-known Back to God Hour hymn "The Lord Bless you and Keep You." A time of fellowship and refreshments capped the joyful celebration in this corner of God's CRC vineyard, a corner and vineyard that, according to Bruce Adema, is only a small part of the domain of the Church Universal.

# Significance




We all have a need to feel significant. I believe it is something that God created as part of making us in his image. God wants our lives to be significant – but on his terms. We make a mistake, however, when we think "It's all about me." In fact when we do so, we often get in the way!

What I believe is needed is a God-centered context for being.

Presently, I have the privilege of a month's leave of absence from my regular work at CSS in order to provide some temporary leadership assistance to the Kenya office of CRWRC. Sounds exotic? Maybe. Different? For sure! Far away from home? Yes. Important? It certainly feels like it!

CRWRC has many different programs in stewardship, health, HIV-AIDS, relief, business development and income-generation; and it works with many church-based and Christian business partners in both North America and Kenya. Literally millions of dollars of programming go through the Kenya office. That is why when a key leader leaves, there is a big hole that must be filled – even temporarily. So yes, being here does make me feel important, but that is not what I was sent here for.

I need to quash my own ego. In fact, shortly after arrival and when I had a better understanding of the full weight of the challenge, I knew full well that I couldn't do this work on my own. I need God's help, and I found myself praying for wisdom, discernment and a hedge against any self-driven notion of "I-can-do-it-myself."

In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians I came across two passages that were particularly helpful in connecting importance and purpose in the right perspective:

*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.... And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.* Ephesians 2:10, 22

Only when we realize that we are God's creation, are we enabled to do 'good works' – important works. And then only in the power of Jesus Christ. That enabling applies wherever God places us and we have the privilege of serving. It's what is done with and for Christ that lasts.

When we focus too much on ourselves, we get it wrong. When we let Christ work through us, we are built up and become "*a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*" Now, what could be more important than that?

Time and time again I need to remind myself of these teachings. My own pride gets in the way (thankfully God then does something to remind me where significance comes from). I pray that each one of you might find that same challenge in your lives, and learn to lean on God's Spirit. Avoid leaning on your own understanding; let go and let God lead you by his Spirit. He created each one of us on purpose for purpose – his purposes!

**Stewardly Tip:** A small act: Say "Hi" to a stranger. Say "Thank you" whenever you can. Give a compliment or a word of encouragement to members of your family (we too often take the ones closest to us for granted) and to people you meet. Offer and provide a needed hand of assistance. It's often the small acts that are significant in the lives of others.

***Readers:*** Share your 'Stewardly Tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestions (by mail to *Christian Courier* or by email to my address below) and provide your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask you for more details.

Next issue: Stewardship Basics – 1

*Rick DeGraaf works for Christian Stewardship Services in Markham, Ontario Rick's email: rickd@csservices.ca*

**How can you benefit charity AND your family?**

CSS offers advice on many ways to **benefit charity and still benefit your family.** Confidential visits made across Canada.

*Connecting Donors, Charities & Ministries*

Christian Stewardship Services 1-800-267-8890 | admin@csservices.ca www.csservices.ca

## Polish religious orders turn to advertising

**Jonathan Luxmoore**

Warsaw (ENI) – Roman Catholic religious orders in Poland have taken to advertising to try and stem a decline in vocations.

"The church has been advertising itself for two thousand years," Dariusz Kowalczyk, the head of the Jesuit order in Poland, was quoted as saying by the Gazeta Wyborcza newspaper. "Today, the adverts are more sophisticated and this isn't surprising; there's the Internet and colour printing, and it would a sin not to use them," he explained.

The newspaper showed a Warsaw church billboard depicting two monks on a country lane above the words "Join us!" Another advertisement, featuring a handsome, unshaven man in a clerical collar, proclaimed "Hard guy? No, a Jesuit."

Several orders were also using direct-mail adverts, Gazeta Wyborcza reported, with one closed female congregation offering a "passionate life in seclusion".

The Rev. Bartlomiej Krol, a priest who heads a new monastic Web site, www.zakon.pl, said orders such as the Franciscans and Dominicans now had specialists in "promotion and recruitment", who were also trained in "creating an order image".

The president of Poland's Conference of Female Superiors, Jolanta Olech, said Roman Catholic monks and nuns were keen to use "modern possibilities" to promote the contemplative life. "Since I don't go around the streets every-day, I haven't seen the latest billboards," she told Ecumenical News International at the end of May.

"But we all have our own Web sites and are very much open to new methods. It would be quite wrong to think we're somehow distrustful of modern technology," Olech said.

Priestly vocations doubled in Poland after the election of Pope John Paul II in 1978. However, the Catholic information agency KAI reported in April that recruitment to Poland's 57 male and 113 female orders had dropped by a third.

Olech said most orders now used computers and mobile telephones to communicate and promote their work. "But of course, the best advertising will always be our honest, ordered life," she said. "We have a problem with vocations now, and this won't be solved by posters and billboards."

## Polish priest criticized for naming non-paying parishioners

**Jonathan Luxmoore**

Warsaw (ENI) – A Roman Catholic priest in Poland has been criticized for publicly humiliating parishioners who failed to pay for the upkeep of his church.

"It's hard to prescribe how a rector should act in such situations – everything depends on how well he feels he knows his flock and what he thinks he can do," a spokesperson for the western Poland diocese of Zielona Gora-Gorzow, Andrzej Sapieha, was quoted as saying in Poland's *Metro* daily newspaper.

"It's no secret that small parishes are often poorly off financially and depend heavily on involvement by parishioners. Perhaps this priest wanted to mobilise them this way for a greater role in church life," he said.

The church official was responding to reports that the rector of St John the Baptist parish at Bogdaniec, the Rev. Gabriel Stozek, regularly read out the names of residents who failed to pay for his church and ordered them to clean it.

The town administrator, Bronislaw Wiacek, defended the rector's action, noting that around one-third of the parish's 2500 inhabitants had failed to make contributions for the church, which was restored in 1978 and had recently been given a new roof and a landscaped garden.

The rector was, however, criticized in local newspaper editorials, including one in the daily *Lubuska Gazeta*, which said he had not consulted local inhabitants about what he does.

The Catholic Church in Poland has in the past been criticized for failing to obtain consent for the public naming of parishioners.

In August 2006, several dioceses were reported to have agreed to name convicted drink-drivers from parish pulpits at the request of Justice Ministry officials, who said public censure was needed to supplement convictions.

Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily newspaper reported on June 6 that a list of teachers had been posted on a school notice board at Kroczewo in the Plock diocese after they ignored requests by the local rector, Marek Zawadzki, to prepare a street altar for his parish's Corpus Christi procession.

"It's our local tradition – besides which the priest directed us to prepare the altar from his pulpit, so we couldn't refuse," the school's deputy director, Teresa Zaleska, told the newspaper.

## Vatican tells Bush it wants 'negotiated' solution to Mid-East woes

**By Luigi Sandri**

Rome, (ENI) – A meeting between US President George Bush and Pope Benedict XVI was marked by significant agreement on ethical issues such as abortion but by discord on the situation in Iraq, Italian media have reported.

"The half-hour dialogue with the Pope, and the longer meeting with Cardinal Bertone, demonstrated understanding on ethical issues such as the family, but on the issue of peace in the Middle East objective differences remained because of the war," the *Corriere dells Sera* newspaper reported on June 10.

President Bush met the Pope at the Vatican on June 9, the day after a summit meeting of the Group of Eight industrial nations ended in northern Germany. Afterwards, Bush held a separate meeting with Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone and Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, who functions as the Vatican's foreign minister.

In a statement, the Vatican described the discussions as "cordial", while noting that "particular attention was given to the Israeli-Palestinian question, to Lebanon, to the worrying situation in Iraq, and to the critical conditions being experienced by the Christian communities." The Holy See said it hoped for "a 'regional' and 'negotiated' solution to the conflicts and crises afflicting the region".

The statement also said that moral issues were discussed, "among them those concerning human rights and religious freedom, the defence and promotion of life, marriage and the family, the education of the young and sustainable development."

President Bush presented the Pope with a stick on which a once-homeless US artist had decorated the Ten Commandments.

At a media conference after the meeting, Bush said the Pope had expressed "deep concern" about the situation of Christians inside Iraq, less than a week after a priest and three other church members were killed. The US president said he had assured Benedict that the US was urging religious tolerance in Iraq.

## African church leader 'outraged' at Zimbabwe rights abuses

*Rev. Mvume Dandala*

**Stephen Brown**

Cologne, Germany, (ENI) – The leader of a major grouping of African churches has expressed outrage at human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, and has urged the world to help resolve the political crisis in the southern African country.

"What is happening in Zimbabwe is an embarrassment even to us as Africans," said the Rev. Mvume Dandala, general secretary of the Nairobi-based All Africa Conference of Churches, during a recent Protestant convention called the Kirchentag, held in Cologne in western Germany.

"We would like the world to assist us in finding a permanent resolution to the problems we have in Zimbabwe," said Dandala on June 9 at a Kirchentag podium that he shared with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. "We are outraged when we see the amount of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe," Dandala told the audience.

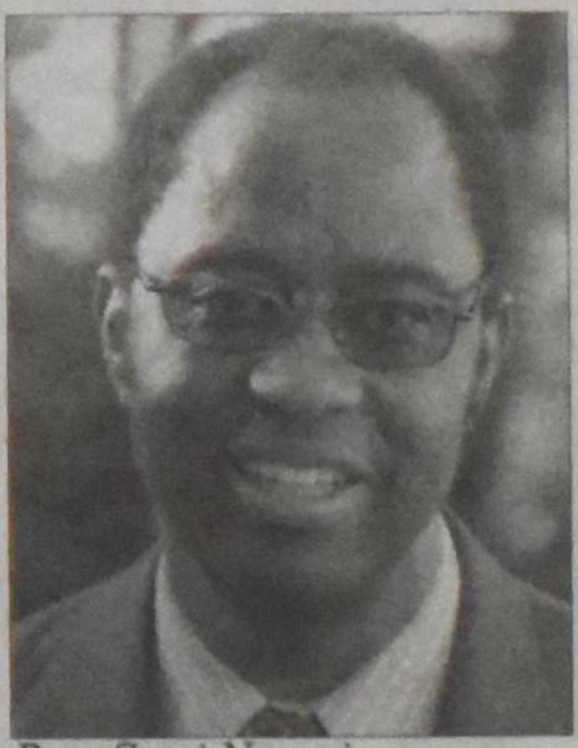
Zimbabweans are struggling to survive in a country said currently to have an annual inflation rate of more than 2200 percent, where there is widespread unemployment and poverty, and where President Robert Mugabe, in power since independence in 1980, resists calls for political reforms and change.

Dandala said, "When our western partners look for solutions in Zimbabwe they seem to show a tendency to dismiss the injustices of land distribution that sparked off the protest in the first place."

He was referring to President Mugabe's land reform program that was introduced ostensibly to correct land distribution imbalances created before independence in 1980.

Some political analysts say the seizure of farms from white commercial farmers under the land reform measures is partly to blame for the dramatic slump in food production in the southern African country.

## Change ideas about mission, Protestant leader tells churches


*Rev. Setri Nyomi*

Geneva, (ENI) – Churches need to examine their old mission strategies and reshape them for the 21st century, according to the Rev. Setri Nyomi, general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

"Addressing this problem is at the heart of strengthening the relationships we have with one another as we engage in mission," Nyomi told mission groups linked to the Christian Reformed Church in North America, at a meeting on June 8 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The WARC leader said the idea that mission involves missionaries or agencies from North America or Europe working in Africa, Asia, Latin America or the Caribbean is a thing of the past.

The priority for Christian mission is in the area where a church is located, said Nyomi, a Presbyterian from Ghana.

"When it comes to mission abroad, we have the opportunity now to welcome missionaries from other parts of the world to North America and Europe, just as missionaries from here go to other parts," said Nyomi.

He added, however, that while churches talk of partnership in mission, many efforts continue to reflect an old style where the rich churches give and the poor receive.

The Grand Rapids meeting coincided with the 150th anniversary of the Christian Reformed Church, which is a member of WARC.

WARC groups 214 churches in 107 countries. It has roots in the 16th century Reformation led by Jean Calvin and others.

# CRC Synod synopsis

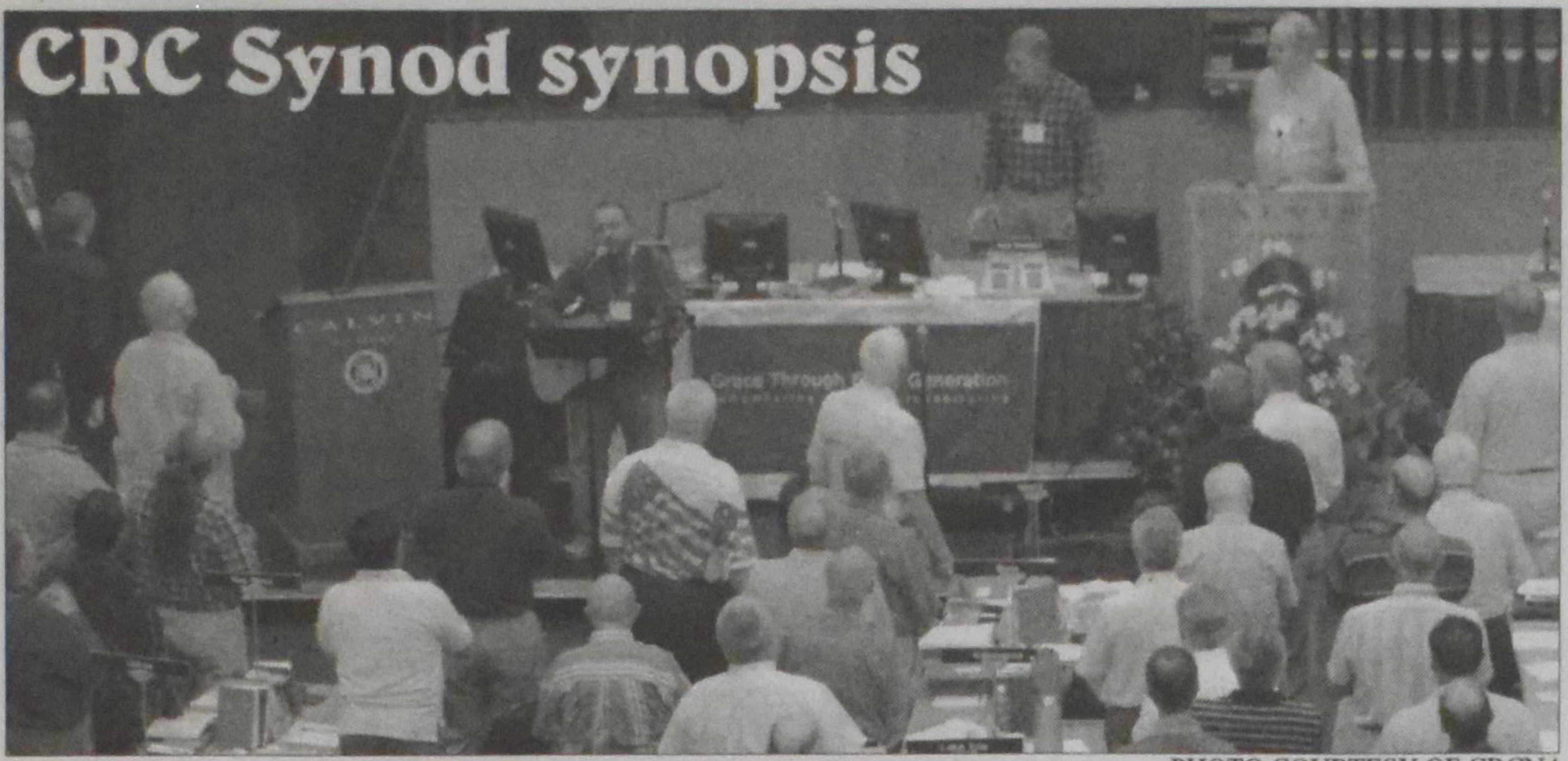


PHOTO COURTESY OF CRCNA

Since all interested CRC readers will get a fulsome report on Synod 2007 in the next issue of the every-home *Banner*, we'll suffice with a brief overview of events culled from the reports by Gayla R. Postma, Dan Postma and Roxanne VanFarowe.

It wasn't just another synod; it was also the celebration of the CRC's 150 anniversary, with some 12,000 worshipers filling the Van Andel Arena in downtown Grand Rapids and another 2,000 watching the screen in the overflow area. Grand Rapids wasn't the only place to mark the anniversary, as special services were held in 30 different locations in the U.S. and Canada. Bert Witvoet reports on one of them on page 5.

The hot item on the agenda this year, which drew a long list of overtures decrying the so-called seven-year sabbath imposed by last synod, was once again the role of women in the church. This year's synod approved the change to the church order that removes the word "male", thereby opening all offices in the CRC to women.

Synod still sought to accommodate those who are convinced that the move is contrary to Scripture. Any CRC classis that deems the inclusion of female delegates to classis meetings to be divisive will still be able to insist that all delegates be male.

The next CRC synod, however, will be open to women delegates as well as men. Although I've enjoyed hearing all those male voices blending on the floor of synod in the past, the addition of female sopranos and altos should enrich the choir.

An era has passed. I don't know whether anyone has thought of thanking all those generations of men, from the bearded pipe smokers of long ago to the latte-sippers of today, but they do deserve a Thank you – even from the Cloud of Witnesses.

There will still be some hurts on both sides, for the issue has become deeply politicized over the years. Even though they will be able to serve in particular churches within a classis, women can still be prevented from serving as delegates to classis meetings if their classis decides to do so. That will cause some hurt. At the same time, there will be men who are convinced that having women in positions of authority in the church is contrary to Paul's clear statement on the matter, and they will perhaps be offended at sitting side by side with female office-bearers.

In view of the fact that fellow believers all over the world suffer much greater indignities, perhaps we can accept one another without too much gnashing of teeth. Those who know the denomination and the various classes better than I estimate that there will be fewer than a dozen classes that bar women.

Synod approved the creation of a new hymnal which will serve the Reformed Church in America as well as the CRC. It will continue the CRC's tradition of including all 150 psalms, but they will be ordered by subject rather than psalm number. If you don't like that prospect, don't hurry to buy more copies of the grey hymnal; it will probably be quite some time before the new one goes to the printers. I'd love to listen in on the committee meetings when it comes to making song and tune selections, wouldn't you? Maybe they could raise funds by charging admission. A prediction: the new hymnal won't weigh less than the old one – it may be a two-hander.

The reports on how to receive Third Wave phenomena in our churches were of great interest, I thought. The way synod dealt with them was a bit of a disappointment to me. Neither the Majority nor the Minority reports were discussed on the floor of synod. The proposal before synod was to send back the Majority Report for further work. Apparently synod's advisory committee considered the report skimpy on biblical and theological foundations. They wanted something weightier, more thorough, more footnotes. They want something that will really convince us all that those new approaches to present-day prophecy, prayer, healing, and spiritual warfare and deliverance ministries are Spirit-given. Well, not really, because the Majority Report by no means welcomed everything that presents itself as a new wave of the Spirit with wide open arms. The "Cautions" at the end of the report are substantial.

However, the way the Minority Report was dealt with strikes me as regrettable. The authors of that report were dropped from the committee due to irreconcilable differences. You mean they wouldn't have been of any help giving Scriptural and theological grounds for the strong Cautions that will surely be part of the new report as well? That's silly. I think they were ill-used. How can a Minority Report be set aside by synod and the Majority Report be accepted for further expansion without any discussion of their contents?

Okay, it's not a huge deal. The entire matter will be throughly discussed in 2009, and by that time the Third Wave may have turned into a Reformed tsunami. On a second thought, maybe we've had enough of waves and tsunamis that pretend to wash away the old and give us something entirely new. They seem to leave a lot of destruction and debris in their wake.

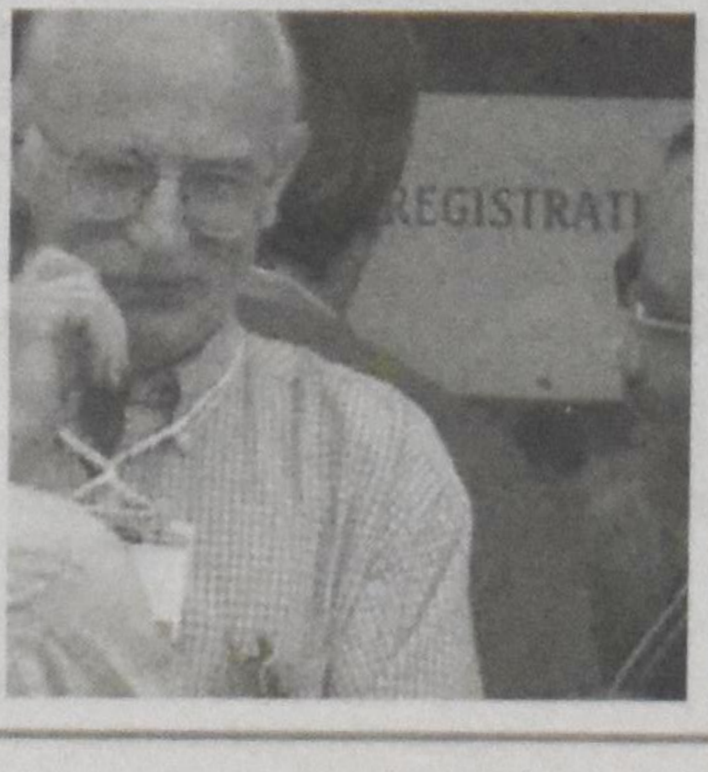
The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa asked the CRC to consider the Belhar Confession and to respond to it. Synod 2006 had noted that the CRC lacks a strong confession on race relations. That's true – and it is true of quite a number of ethical and social issues. In the past we've avoided spelling out the social implications of the faith that we profess, for then there is no end to adding statements pertaining to the latest hot issues. What about a statement regarding our welcoming of the stranger and the immigrant, for example?

I suspect, though, that once Belhar gets on the synodical agenda, there will be no saying Nay to it. Who wants to go on record opposing a statement against racism?

On a less controversial note, synod issued a resolution of thanksgiving for the life of Dr. George Vandervelde, which I print in its entirety:

### Resolution of Thanksgiving for the Person and Service of George Vandervelde

The Board of Trustees and the Interchurch Relations Committee of the Christian Reformed Church desire to express gratitude to God for the life and ministry of George Vandervelde. His many years of service to the church worldwide and as an ecumenical ambassador for the Christian Reformed Church is gratefully noted and celebrated. George's keen intellect and winsome personality made him an effective participant in numerous church-wide discussions, complex ecumenical relationships, and an articulate spokesperson for all matters reformed. Christian condolences are extended to George's wife, Bea, and their children in this time of mourning their loss. The Church in many places will miss his contributions to the oneness of God's people in Christ. Bea and other members of the family are commended to God's gracious care.



# Malaysia at the crossroads

**Elizabeth Kendal / Special to ASSIST News Service**

AUSTRALIA (ANS) – On 30 May 2007, in Malaysia's Federal Court a panel of three judges ruled 2 to 1 that Sharia Courts (courts of Islamic law) have jurisdiction over a Muslim's apostasy (conversion out of Islam). They were deciding the case of Lina Joy, a Malay (Muslim) convert to Christianity who wanted her conversion legally recognized. So until Lina Joy can get the Sharia Court to approve her apostasy, 'Islam' will remain on her identity card and she will be obliged to abide by Islamic laws, including a marriage law that a Muslim woman can marry only a Muslim man.

The dissenting opinion of Judge Richard Malanjum (the only non-Muslim on the panel) was that it was 'illegal' and 'unreasonable' to ask Lina to turn to the Sharia Court where apostasy is treated as a crime, punishable by fines and detention in Islamic 'prison-like rehabilitation centres'. The Malaysian Bar Council has also condemned the ruling saying that no court should have implied powers to curtail rights that are constitutionally granted, and whenever there is a conflict the Federal Constitution must prevail. The Federal Court ruling strips all Malays (constitutionally deemed to be Muslim) and other Malaysian Muslims (including converts to Islam who later want to leave Islam) of their fundamental and constitutional right to religious freedom. The Federal Court ruling has also emboldened Malaysia's Islamic forces who will doubtless now move to extend their influence. Malaysia's main Islamic party – Parti Islam se-Malaysia (PAS) – has already proposed on the basis of the ruling that apostasy should be made a criminal offence in every state and punishments should be more severe.

Elections are due in Malaysia before early 2008. Many people are disenchanted with the ruling party, UMNO, and PAS is hoping to capitalize. PAS is modernizing and softening its image, replacing turbaned clerics with Western-educated, smartly-suited so-called 'Young Turks', hoping the new image will attract Chinese and Indian voters. This has nothing to do with policy and everything to do with marketing – political Islam in a suit is still political Islam.

Please pray that as debate rages around Islam and liberty Malaysians will – in greater numbers and with greater voice – demand openness and liberty, which are essential for progress. If Islamization is challenged, Islamists will resort to threats, protests, riots and/or terrorism to try to force appeasement and extract concessions. If Islamisation keeps advancing, repression and persecution will escalate and non-Muslims will emigrate, making reform even more difficult and sending Malaysia backwards. Malaysia is at the crossroads.

*Elizabeth Kendal is researcher for the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission* (WEA RLC)

Anniversary

# Tea party marks beginning of MCC thrift shops

**Gladys Terichow**

WINNIPEG, Man. – An afternoon tea party 35 years ago in a small southern Manitoba town marked the beginning of a movement that affects the lives of people throughout the world.

Out of that meeting grew a network of thrift shops that have raised more than $100 million for MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) since Selma Loewen and three friends instigated the opening of the first shop in Altona, Manitoba, March 17, 1972 – a project that was expected to last only three to six months.

"This is so overwhelming – to think that our dream has grown to this – to God be the glory," said Selma Loewen at a celebration in Winnipeg in May to recognize the contributions of the four founders of MCC thrift shops.

Loewen had attended the MCC Manitoba annual meeting in February 1972 – a meeting where John Hostetler, director of MCC's Material Resources department had reported that MCC was reducing shipments of used clothing for overseas distribution.

"I thought, What will we do with all our clothes?" recalled Loewen. "Then a light bulb went on – literally, a light bulb went on. It seems like yesterday. It's still so vivid in my mind."

She saw the potential for women's groups from different Mennonite churches in her community to work together to give local families easy access to good quality, low-cost clothing and household items and to donate the proceeds to MCC.

MCC PHOTO BY GLADYS TERICHOW

*Founders of MCC's network of thrift stores, Linie Friesen, Selma Loewen, Susan Giesbrecht and Sara Stoesz at a celebration in Winnipeg recently to recognize their contributions.*

The following day Loewen shared her idea with three friends, Linie Friesen, Sara Stoesz and Susan Giesbrecht. "I phoned them the next day, I was so excited," she said. "There was no hesitation; everyone was willing to do this with me."

The next step was hosting an afternoon tea party to discuss this project with the director of MCC Manitoba, Arthur Driedger. With Driedger's endorsement, the four women approached women's groups in their home churches to recruit volunteers and collect donations of used clothing and household items.

Within a few weeks, the women had rented a facility for the shop – a small building formerly used as a shoe repair shop, named their project the Altona Community Self Help Centre and opened the doors to the public. During the first six weeks of operations, the shop raised $1,000 for MCC.

By the end of 1972, three more shops had opened in Manitoba, one in Steinbach and two in Winnipeg. In 1973, shops opened in Morris and Brandon. In 1974, the movement spread to the provinces of Ontario and Saskatchewan and to Bluffton, Ohio. Today, there are 55 shops in Canada and 52 in the United States.

Judy Dyck, MCC Canada thrift shop coordinator, said these thrift shops provided the perfect solution to the now legendary statement made by John Hostetler in the early 1970s – "What we need is a machine that will turn clothing into cash."

In the early years, shops were started and operated by women representing different Mennonite churches. Today, they are administered by boards and committees that include men. Most shops have expanded the sale of used goods to include appliances, furniture and books.

Although raising money for MCC is a primary motivation, the four founders unanimously agree the most rewarding benefit of thrift shops is the impact in the local community.

"For me, one of the big things that happened was that we now worked together with women from other churches," said Loewen.

Twice a week volunteers at the Altona shop host a community 'faspa' and serve coffee and dainties for a suggested donation of $2 in a coffee room that has seating for 60 people. "I'm thrilled when I go to the shop and see that every seat in the coffee room is filled," said Susan Giesbrecht. "That type of community spirit means more to me than the money that is generated."

Another significant contribution of the thrift shops was raising awareness of global crafts sold through the MCC SELFHELP Crafts program, now Ten Thousand Villages, said Linie Friesen.

Before the Altona shop opened, Friesen had taken a display kit to women's meetings in different churches to accept orders for these global crafts. "It could take over a year for the order to be filled," she said.

A "craft corner" in the Altona shop made it possible for Friesen to display and sell global crafts in the shop, setting the precedent for thrift shops to share their premises with MCC SELFHELP Crafts. These craft corners, said Friesen, created visibility for this program that has developed into a large fair trade organization that provides talented artisans in poor countries a fair price for their work.

Sara Stoesz, who served as a provincial coordinator of MCC thrift shops in the 1980s, said thrift shops have maintained a strong connection with MCC's material aid department. Volunteers, she said, use recycled clothing and fabric donated to the shops to make blankets shipped by MCC to people experiencing poverty, war and disaster.

ALTONA THRIFT SHOP HISTORY BOOK

*Linie Friesen, Selma Loewen, Susan Giesbrecht and Sara Stoesz coordinated the opening of the first MCC thrift shop in 1972, starting a movement that has raised more than $100 million for MCC.*

**De Nederlandse COURANT**

**North America's oldest and most published Dutch language paper and exclusive aftermarket distributor of the Libelle and Margriet magazines in its 55th year of publication.**

**SPECIAL NEW SUBSCRIPTION OFFER**

**De Nederlandse COURANT:** ❑ 1 year $15.00 (regular $30.00) ❑ 2 years $35.00 (regular $57.00)

**❑ Margriet or ❑ Libelle with De Nederlandse COURANT:** ❑ 1 year $100.00 (regular $150.00) ❑ 2 years $190.00 (regular $270.00)

**Name:**____________

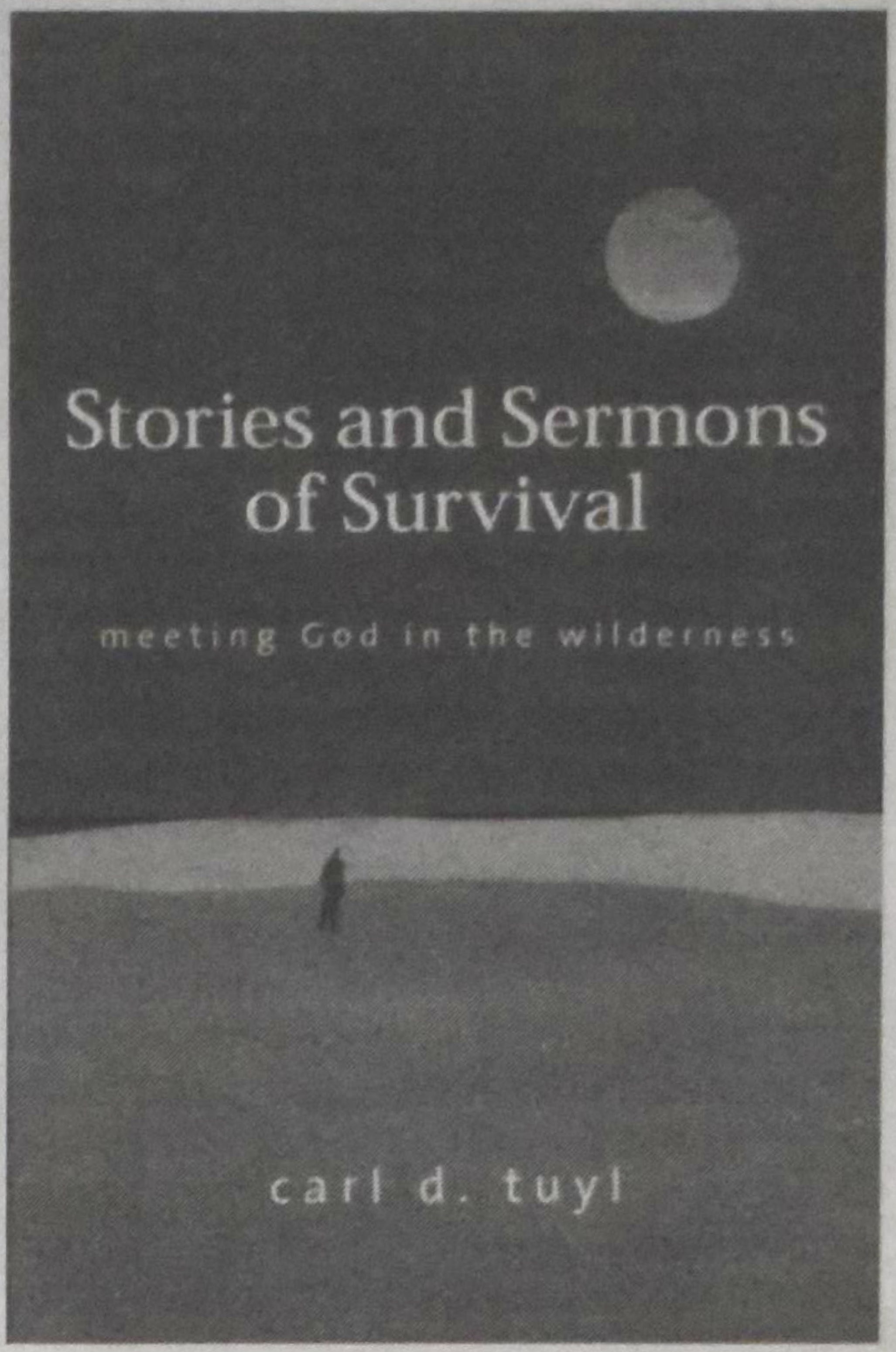
**Address:**____________

**City/Code:**____________

**Phone:**________ **E-Mail:**________

**Mail coupon with your cheque to:**
**De Nederlandse COURANT**
**2110 Hunt Crescent, Burlington ON L7M 2N9**

# The dread of darkness




*Carl Tuyl, a former columnist for* CC, *has written a fascinating and highly readable book. It intersperses stories of crisis drawn from his own life with biblical reflections, the one deepening the other. To describe the book, I thought, would be inadequate, so we publish one of the chapters here to give you a little taste and to whet your appetite.*

*The book is available through amazon.ca for $18.37.* HdN

*I don't know how it happened but my bike went off the path. I had confiscated the bike from some German who himself had probably expropriated it from a Dutch citizen. By pedaling across the country, about two hundred kilometres, I hoped to reach safety before dawn. Daylight would bring the risk of being arrested again. I had biked already for a few hours when all of a sudden a cloud covered what little moonlight there had been. I lost track of the bicycle path. I fell on soft earth, but I held on to my bicycle.*

*It was dark. So dark that I could hardly see a hand held before my eyes. I had never experienced darkness like it. I shuffled my feet over what seemed to be grass, expecting to find the pavement again. All I felt under my feet though was grass or some other vegetation. I don't know how long I searched for hard surface so that I could jump on my bicycle again. It seemed a long time.*

*Fear fell upon me with a sudden rush. The dread of being captured was one part of my consternation, but being lost in utter darkness brought me close to panic. Darkness held me in its grip with a tightness that isolated me totally from my surroundings. I felt wrapped in an impenetrable veil. I continued to search with my feet since my eyes were useless. Shuffle left, shuffle right, forward and backward but I did not find solid ground.*

*There was something in that total darkness that terrified me.*

*Thinking back about it I can still touch the fear that overpowered me. It took all of my willpower to remain rational and not to surrender to incoherent panic. I stopped shuffling, and started a discussion with myself. I was pretty sure that I had fallen to the left of the path, so I told myself. I began to slowly move to my right.*

*Very carefully I put one foot in front of the other, holding on to my bicycle for dear life. No terrafirma, but just then a shimmer of light glistened through the darkness. I recognized the presence of my guardian angel who a couple of years before had given me new courage, almost new life, with a couple of moonrays.*

*There is a verse in Psalm 121 where the poet sings of God's protection, and he writes: "The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night ... Not only did the moon not hurt me but twice the moon came to my rescue.*

*I found the bicycle path. It was much further away than I had thought. I jumped on my bicycle and continued my travel through the night.*

**John 1:4**

I wonder where in our lives we could ever experience real absolute darkness. Somehow there's always at least a glimmer of light around us. It might be the silver ray of an upcoming moon, a small stripe of white under the bedroom door, or the yellowish gleam of a far away streetlight. There's always some light. Especially around the season of Christmas there is light more than at any other time. We light up our houses and put tiny lights on the Christmas trees.

On a couple of occasions in my life I have experienced total darkness. I will not bore you with descriptions of when and where, but let me tell you darkness is scary. It robs you of sight. It is like the deadly grip of an attacker. It steals away your orientation and it makes you wonder where you are.

Someone close to me is blind and sometimes I want to have a sense of what that is like. I close my eyes and wander around without sight and without failing I hurt myself colliding with some piece of furniture or a wall that all of a sudden arises in my way.

Darkness does that to you. It strips you of certainty and it surrounds you with hazard and peril. It wraps around you like the suffocating embrace of a boa constrictor. Darkness does all that.

And as the Bible traces our beginning and totally rewinds the history of humanity and the environment to its very earliest moment all you find is darkness. There was darkness over the surface of the deep. Formlessness and emptiness wrapped in darkness. That was in the beginning, so says Genesis. That's all there was.

And in that empty darkness sounded the word of God like the command of a general that sets a whole army into motion. Let there be light and there was light. Perhaps the power, the might of God is nowhere so vividly, so dramatically displayed in the Bible as there in those first sentences. Let there be light and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.

From there on in light in the Bible is the symbol for goodness, righteousness, and honesty and justice. God himself called the light good.

It is obvious that John here at the onset of his Gospel recalls that all-powerful act of God when he created light. He starts his Gospel with the same phrase: in the beginning. Reading between the lines you hear John say: here is another beginning, here is a new beginning. And watch again, there is the good light. John refers there to Jesus who also called himself the Light of the world. A light in the darkness. The light shines in the darkness, says Isaiah.

Let us see together first of all that with and in the coming of Jesus God made a new beginning. We can imagine the setting there in Bethlehem. Two rather youngish people, an innkeeper and shepherds. It all sort of sounds like an ordinary story in an ordinary place with ordinary people playing their role. But there is a momentous something happening there. Through the everyday, ordinary circumstances, woven into the tapestry of every day life God is making a new beginning. Reconciling the world to himself.

I read a story about a couple that some forty or fifty years ago separated and divorced after two months of marriage. The man never gave up, kept having contact with his ex-wife telling her all those years that he still loved her and guess what. After that long separation they were re-married.

It does not even begin to compare with God's new beginning, but it is albeit vaguely, almost obscurely, a likeness of what happened there in Bethlehem. God repeats his first creative command: let there be light.

It spoke volumes to me. God did not forsake his creation. Let us personalize that God did not forsake you and God did not forsake me.

Another saying of John immediately came to mind – God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. Again I ask you to apply that to yourself – God so loved me that he gave his only begotten son.

But notice also that God makes new beginnings. I once spoke to someone in one of our prisons. This man said to me that God had given up on him because of all the terrible things he had done.

But let's get this clear – God did not give up on his creation and God never gives up on people. There is a prayer at the ending of Psalm 138. This is what David prays: "Do not abandon the works of your hand."

One more thought about that. There have been a few situations in my life when I could not see beyond the present. Where the future seemed closed and the end seemed near. God's own people in exile in Babylon were in that state of mind. We are stuck here in this foreign land with no hope of ever seeing the promised land again. We will never see Jerusalem again. There is no more future for us and then God's mouthpiece Isaiah comes with this wonderful message: I am the Lord, that is my name, see the former things have taken place and new things I declare. With God you are never stuck in whatever circumstance. And way at the end of that wonderful book of the Bible God says to his people that you will be called by a new name.

Not for nothing does the Spirit through Paul call God the God of hope. God always has new things in store. So those are our first observations about the beginning of John's Gospel.

Then John continues: "The life was the light of men." I take it that the life of Jesus is a guiding light. There is that old simple question that people sometimes ask themselves when they face some problem: what would Jesus do? I think it is still a good question. And I am every time again amazed about the answer when in certain situations I myself asked that question. What would Jesus do or say. I am pretty sure that that is what Paul meant when he wrote to the Ephesians: "Live as children of light."

The Bible itself records how the answer to that question can surprise you. Let us recall just one example. The woman caught in adultery. Perhaps not written in some older manuscripts, but nevertheless accepted as trustworthy by the church.

A well-known story. Adultery was a capital offence. The death penalty was called for. All easy and straight forward: guilty and deserving of death by stoning. No doubt about it.

And what did Jesus do? You all know it. Not what all those men gathered there had expected. And Jesus promised his disciples and us all that the Holy Spirit would make it possible to find the answer to our wondering about what Jesus would do or say. This is his promise:

"The counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the father will send to you in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

There was a time of great turmoil in the church. The question was: should Gentiles be included in the membership. It came to a head when Peter had gone to Cornelius' house and even baptized him. Him being a Gentile! Great consternation and criticism all around. Not a situation that is a rare occurrence in the church. Peter is called on

*Continued on p. 16*

# The deaconhood of believers and the Kuyperian vision

Harry A. Van Belle

My congratulations to Gerry Gerrits on the fine review of Agnes Amelink's book, *Gereformeerden Overzee*. Amelink's analysis of the history of the Reformed Christian community in Canada is insightful. It echoes much of what I found when I researched the history of this community in 1988 and it updates my analysis of that time considerably. I think it would be good for people to read both of Amelink's books together for comparison, since the history of the Gereformeerden in The Netherlands over the past five decades is quite different from the history of Reformed Christians in Canada.

I suppose I would also call myself one of the erstwhile "young dogs" she refers to, who has now become a senior citizen. This fact prompts me to disagree with her on one point, as Gerrits summarizes her conclusion that the "Kuyperian vision, mission and activism…has lost much of its urgency, strength and drive" among Reformed Christians in Canada. I would argue that, on the contrary, this Kuyperian vision, mission and action (*not* activism) has done anything but disappear. Instead, over the past several decades this vision has matured and deepened into an awareness of what I would call *the deaconhood of all believers*. It is about this awareness among Reformed Christian Canadians today, as heirs of the Kuyperian vision, that I would like to make a few comments.

### How the deaconhood of believers relates to the Kuyperian vision

First of all, Kuyper's own vision was never about constructing "pillars" in Dutch society within which the Gereformeerden could feel safe. Neither was the call for separate Christian organizations by Canadian Kuyperians their way of protecting their young from the negative influences of secular Canada. Rather, these actions were always meant to bring the grace of the gospel to bear on the world of education, labour, politics, the arts, etc. It was always about serving the world at large by means of Christian social action.

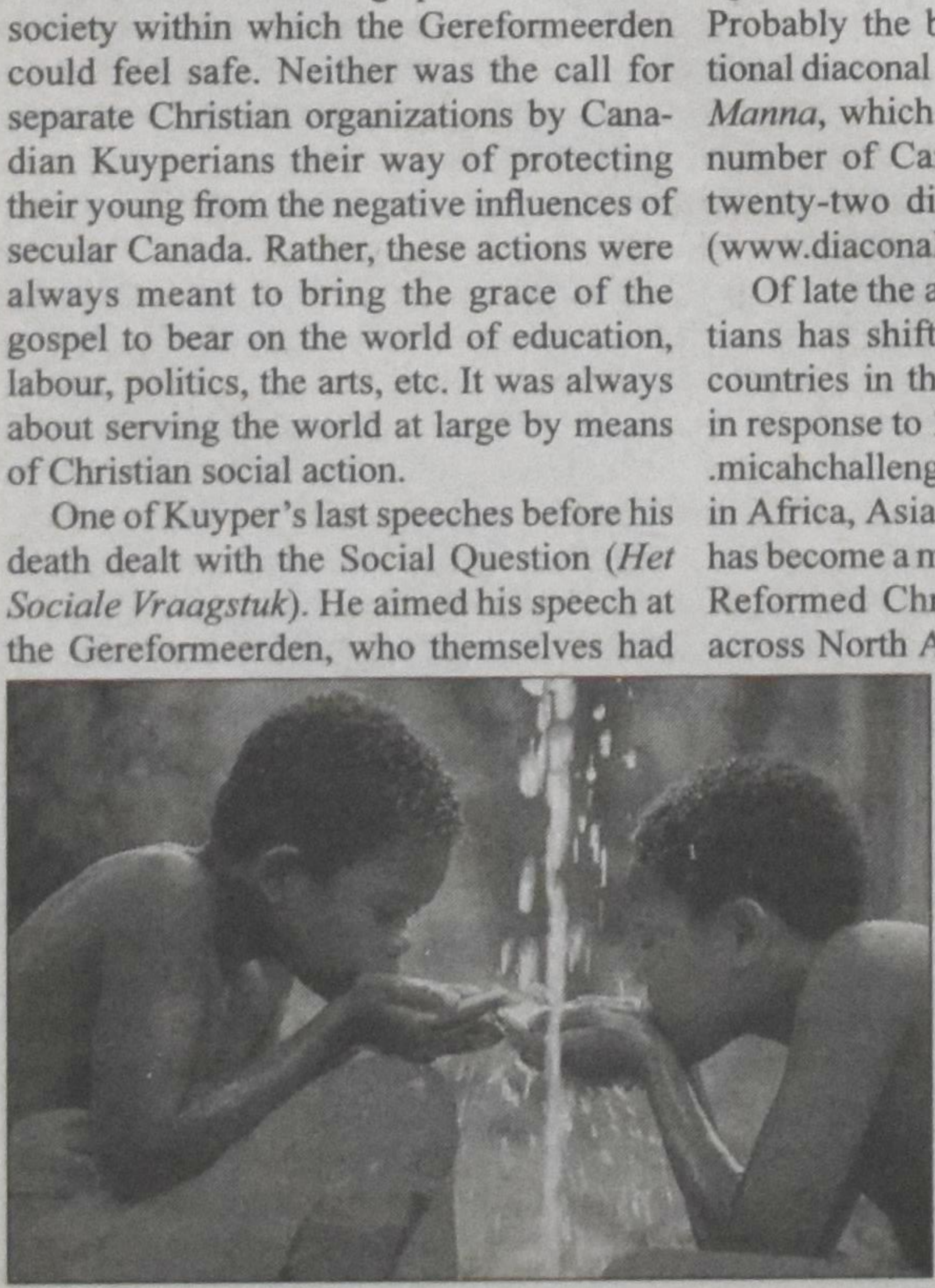
One of Kuyper's last speeches before his death dealt with the Social Question (*Het Sociale Vraagstuk*). He aimed his speech at the Gereformeerden, who themselves had been the marginalized (*kleine luyden*) of Holland in the past, but who by now had become established members of society. In this speech he pleads with them from now on to direct their efforts to bringing justice to the poor and the marginalized in society. This call to bring justice, (not charity, justice) to the disadvantaged among us is at the heart of our recent re-awakening to the fact that all of God's children are to be deacons to one another. In that sense the awareness of the deaconhood of believers can lay claim to being heir to the Kuyperian vision. Or so I would argue.

### Awareness of deaconhood as the continuation of the Kuyperian vision

It has always been part of the Christian life that the church should take care of its poor, the widows and the orphans. Deacons are elected to serve that purpose. My grandmother became a widow when my mother and her siblings were still small. For this reason she had to go to work cleaning houses of well-to-do people.

But she also received financial aid from the diaconate of her church. When governments began to enact social welfare policies like widows and old age pensions it became less necessary to give financial support to the poor in the church. In consequence the deacons began to concentrate on providing support to needy people *outside* the boundaries of the church locally, nationally and internationally. Locally they supported all kinds of programs designed to ease the lot of the needy, programs like the food bank, youth emergency shelters, prison ministries, single parent support groups, counseling agencies, teenage pregnancy centres, etc. Probably the best example of current national diaconal work in Canada is *Operation Manna*, which is the concerted effort by a number of Canadian churches to support twenty-two different outreach ministries (www.diaconalministries.com).

Of late the attention of Reformed Christians has shifted more to the developing countries in the Two-third world. Perhaps in response to *The Micah Challenge* (www.micahchallenge.org), helping needy people in Africa, Asia and South/Central America has become a major preoccupation for many Reformed Christian church communities across North America. Christian organizations outside the church also have begun to support like-minded organizations in the non-Western world. To mention only two, the CLAC currently provides financial, administrative and educational aid to fledgling Christian labour associations in Columbia and Cuba. And World-wide Christian Schools, (www.wwcs.org) the heart-and-brain child of the Christian School movement in Canada and USA, now is actively supporting the establishment of Christian schools all over the Two-third world.



Volunteers working for disaster relief.

But by far the most established and effective leader among us in providing aid internationally is the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (www.crwrc.org). Its Disaster Relief Service and Community Development work are well known among us and have the support and active participation of many members of the Reformed Christian community. Many retired community members regularly travel to disaster areas to fix roofs or to renovate houses as part of CRWRC's DRS program. It is simply astounding how much CRWRC has been able to do for people hit by natural disasters like the Tsunami and Katrina.

I am more familiar with the community development work of CRWRC than its DRS. My wife Jenny and I traveled through Kenya and Uganda last February to see first hand the work that CRWRC field staff are doing in these places. We saw the way CRWRC helps local church communities teach its members how best to obtain food security, how to generate income and how to come to terms with the dreadful HIV/AIDS pandemic among them. We also saw how they help local churches to provide adult learning and spiritual guidance to their members. What struck us most was how familiarly Reformed the programs and policies of CRWRC are. In attempting to help local communities to solve their many problems CRWRC field workers demonstrate a great deal of practical realism and expertise. At the same time they also clearly work out of a vision that is rooted in a Reformed Christian world and life view. They do not just view poverty as a physical problem, but as a spiritual problem as well and they take time to build relationships with the locals because spiritual needs are best served in interpersonal relationships.

### Awareness of deaconhood as transformation of the Kuyperian vision

It seems clear to me that the diaconal efforts I have described so far are all linked to one another in that all of them are motivated by a Reformed Christian vision that inspired Kuyper and his followers in the past and continues to inspire new generations of Reformed Christians in Canada now. At the same time this recent awakening to the deaconhood of all believers also represents a *transformation* of the Kuyperian vision.

There is something new afoot in the Reformed Christian community today. It seems as if the deacon is waking up in *all* of us. When it comes to charitable giving members of this community are no longer satisfied with putting money in the collection plate for diaconal purposes. Instead they want to become personally involved in the outreach work that the deacons support. And so locally we see many church members volunteering in food banks, or working in soup kitchens, or becoming a big brother or sister, or working a crisis hotline, etc., etc. The list is endless. Nationally they may spend part of their vacation doing disaster relief work or volunteering as counselors at a camp for physically, emotionally or mentally challenged children. Internationally, it has become very popular for teenagers and older people alike in the church to go on short term mission trips to build houses, schools and orphanages, all in an effort to do more than sit in a pew on Sunday. They want to get their hands dirty for the sake of Jesus Christ. They want to walk with the poor, with the down-and-out, the marginalized and the disadvantaged of the world. In the final analysis they don't so much want to *do* something for them as to *be* with them and to get to know them personally.

So, no, Agnes Amelink, the Kuyperian vision and mission has not left the Reformed Christian community. It is alive and well especially among its young people. It has merely changed its dress and has become transformed into an emphasis on the deaconhood of all believers. And this young dog, who is now becoming old, likes that just fine.

*Harry and Jenny Van Belle are working as volunteers for CRWRC*

Church history

# Sesquicentennial Reflections 1857-2007: From CRC to ACRC?

Arie C. Leder

Since 1880 we have been known as the Christian Reformed Church, even though the adjective "Holland" was still attached at that time. It wasn't our first name, however. From April 8, 1857, the birth date of the CRC, to 1880, the following names described us: Holland Reformed, True Dutch Reformed, the Christian Seceded Church, and the True Holland Reformed Church. The latter name was in use from 1864. Churches were given the freedom not to use "true." Our first local option decision.

### The first hundred years

The variety of names discloses the nascent community's struggle to define itself in the new world, not only in terms of its experiences in the Netherlands, but also the more recent attempts to distinguish itself from the Dutch Reformed Church (now the RCA) from whom our ancestors seceded in 1857. It was about being true to the Reformed traditions as they understood them.

On April 8, 1907 the CRC celebrated its 50th anniversary at the Auditorium on South Ionia Street in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The gathering, as it was called, consisted of opening and closing prayers, congregational and choral singing in English and Dutch, a poem of welcome, and several short speeches. Rev. Henry Beets delivered the first speech in English: "The Christian Reformed Church in its Origin and Period of Struggle." The others, delivered in Dutch, were: "The Character of Our People, the Dark and the Light Side ("Het Karakter van ons Volk, naar Schaduwen Lichtzijde.") by Rev. I. Van Dellen; "Our Dangers" (Onze Gevaren") by Rev. H. Van Hoogen (Read by Rev. J. W. Brink because Van Hoogen had died.); "The Christian Reformed Pulpit in America" (De Christelijk Gereformeerde Kansel in Amerika") by Rev. K. Van Goor; and, "Our Calling and Ideals for the Future" (Onze Roeping en Idealen voor de Toekomst") by Rev. J. Groen. These and other full length addresses may be found in J. Noordewier, et. Al., Gedenkboek van het Vijftigjarig Jubileum der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk A.D. 1857-1907 (Grand Rapids: J. B. Hulst and B. Sevensma, 1907.).

By 1907 the CRC was on the way to becoming an American church. The founders of the church had passed on; a younger generation was in charge. The youthful vigor and immaturity of the CRC formed the basis for Van Hoogen's reflection. He warned the CRC of the potential for recklessness; of the challenges of its diversity – at that time the variety of Dutch backgrounds that made it difficult to work together; and the questioning of the crucial difference between the world and the church so much a part of becoming more American. The CRC must remain, said Van Hoogen, counter-cultural.

Fifty years later Dr. John H. Kromminga reflected on the CRC's one hundred years in his *In The Mirror*. An Appraisal of the Christian Reformed Church (Hamilton: Guardian, 1957). By this time post World War II immigration to Canada had begun to shape the CRC experience, the Dutch language had disappeared from almost all pulpits in the US and by the 1960s was heard from few pulpits in Canada. Our confessional roots were valued, church life began receiving a neo-Kuyperian sheen, mostly in Canada. But being a church in the world was still a challenge. Kromminga acknowledges that Americanization was a problem for the CRC, but that it also presented new opportunities. The isolation of language had been mostly overcome,

*Drawing by Dirk Gringhuis depicting Dominie Van Den Bosch and a small group of men as they meet to split from the Dutch Reformed Church and form the Christian Reformed Church.*

but other forms of isolation remained: dependence on the Netherlands, the Reformed distinctiveness as expressed through separate institutions, and the lack of cooperation with other denominations. None of these enable true evangelism. "Isolationism," he writes, "fosters a diminished view of the needs of the world ... has either no conception of the needs of the world or no concern with them" (53). But, "the perils of contact are essentially the perils of conformity." One of the perils of greater contact in America is losing theological distinctiveness: "One student of American culture has spoken of a recent period in American history when 'religion prospered while theology slowly went bankrupt.' The fact is that American religion is theologically illiterate because that which was different was, by silent common consent, not to be mentioned in our democracy" (55).

He concludes his reflection on conformity thus:

"Contact with such [an American] environment must mean one of two things. It will mean conformity or it will mean friction. For theological distinctiveness is diametrically opposed to it. The Christian Reformed Church is lost if it conforms. No one can say in advance whether it can survive the friction which will result if it retains its distinctiveness while establishing contact. And yet, in the face of all this, the church cannot rest satisfied with the isolated way.

"Thus it would be sheer folly to act as if the situation of the Christian Reformed Church were secure and her future established. The realities of life are cruel and disturbing. The only possible course of action seems to be to retain and develop such an isolation as will produce distinctiveness – genuine distinctiveness; and then to proceed with that distinctiveness into aggressive contact. This, at the cost of the ease and tranquility of the denomination, would be a potential source of good, not only to the denomination itself, but to the other churches round about" (58).

### From our CRC to ACRC: Ecclesiastical Syntax

We don't yet know what the 2007 anniversary book of reflections will say about us. This much is true: The CRC of 1957 was not that of 1907, nor is the CRC of 2007 that of 1957. Kromminga's challenge to make contact with churches outside of the CRC has been successful; it is doubtful that we have retained the theological distinctiveness he charged us to keep. We have had dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church about Lord's Day 80; we participate in WARC, but NAPARC cancelled our affiliation. Preaching from the Heidelberg Catechism is not what it's supposed to be. The psalms we sing today are the so-called seven-eleven choruses: snatches of praise phrases sung multiple times. Psalms to "regular" hymn tunes, never mind those in the Genevan tradition, do not characterize CRC congregational singing in the 21st century.

We also have a sizable bureaucracy in Grand Rapids which, for better or worse, tries to steer the denomination from one vantage point; classical renewal began without synodical approval but with agency support; and local church councils are more deeply rooted in entrepreneurial management styles and views of the church than the confessions and traditional Reformed church polity envisions. The CRC is also more diversified, beyond the Dutch provinces. On a given Sunday services are conducted in English, Korean, Spanish, Chinese, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese. Few church leaders, however, can speak more than one language.

Our orthodoxy is shifting. In 2007 you will more likely get into trouble for political incorrectness than confessional heterodoxy. South of the border we are American, east-coast or west-coast American, West-Michigan or Iowa-American; those who call us Dutch don't know us at all. We're not what we were even fifty years ago. Nor are we agreed about which changes are for the better and which are not.

So, maybe a name change *is* needed. After all since 1880 we've had the same name, and many CRC congregations no longer use the denominational name. Apparently the Board of Trustees is also considering a new name (Has Synod asked them to do so?) Why not give ourselves a new name to reflect our postmodern identity in our 150th year? Sam Hamstra suggests we become the ACRC (Association of Christian Reformed Churches, in his "Modest Proposal," [*The Banner*, March 2007.]), a proposal that shows how far conformity to the American religious scene – a danger Van Hoogen in 1907 and Kromminga in 1957 warned us against – has taken us. This move is on display in the ecclesiastical syntax. Let me explain.

The pronoun "our" appears 13 times in the 1907 anniversary speech titles: our church, our people, our mission, our publications, our dangers, our calling. "We" had an identity. The future was about us and our ideals. A deep sense of the youthful vigor of "our" community was encouraged, then evaluated and judged. Kromminga's 1957 appraisal is definite: the heritage, the isolation, the dangers of conformity. He reflects an intimate knowledge of a community striving to keep its identity while moving beyond its isolation.

Van Hoogen gave us "our" CRC; Kromminga "the" CRC; Hamstra gives us A-CRC. In 150 years we've moved from "our" self-understanding, to a challenge to break our isolation without undermining our theological distinctiveness, to an indefinite sense of our ecclesiastical identity and an openness to change that will not endure the friction, as Kromminga called it, of being true to our theological confession.

Synod's first local option, in 1864, gave churches the right not to use the word "true" as part of the church's name; Hamstra's local option argues for the right of local churches to separate themselves from our church's political identity. No more "our" CRC, no more "the" CRC; only an association of local churches doing their own thing.

Happy 150th birthday

*Arie Leder is Professor of Old Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary.*

*This article first appeared on crconnect at http://crconnect.blogspot.com/*

# Protection from suffering

*So then, banish anxiety from your heart*
*and cast off the troubles of your body,*
*for youth and vigor are meaningless.*
Ecclesiastes 11:10 [NIV]

*Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart,*
*and put away evil from thy flesh:*
*for childhood and youth are vanity.*
[KJV]

**A.A. van Ruler**

Anxiety and sorrow are powers that prowl about in the world and which ambush us at the most unguarded moment. Think of what people are capable of doing to one another. One person can be the cause of untold grief for another. Or think of the unpredictable course of human life, of the things that may befall a person and the many different situations in which he will find himself embroiled. Life brings a great deal of suffering with it.

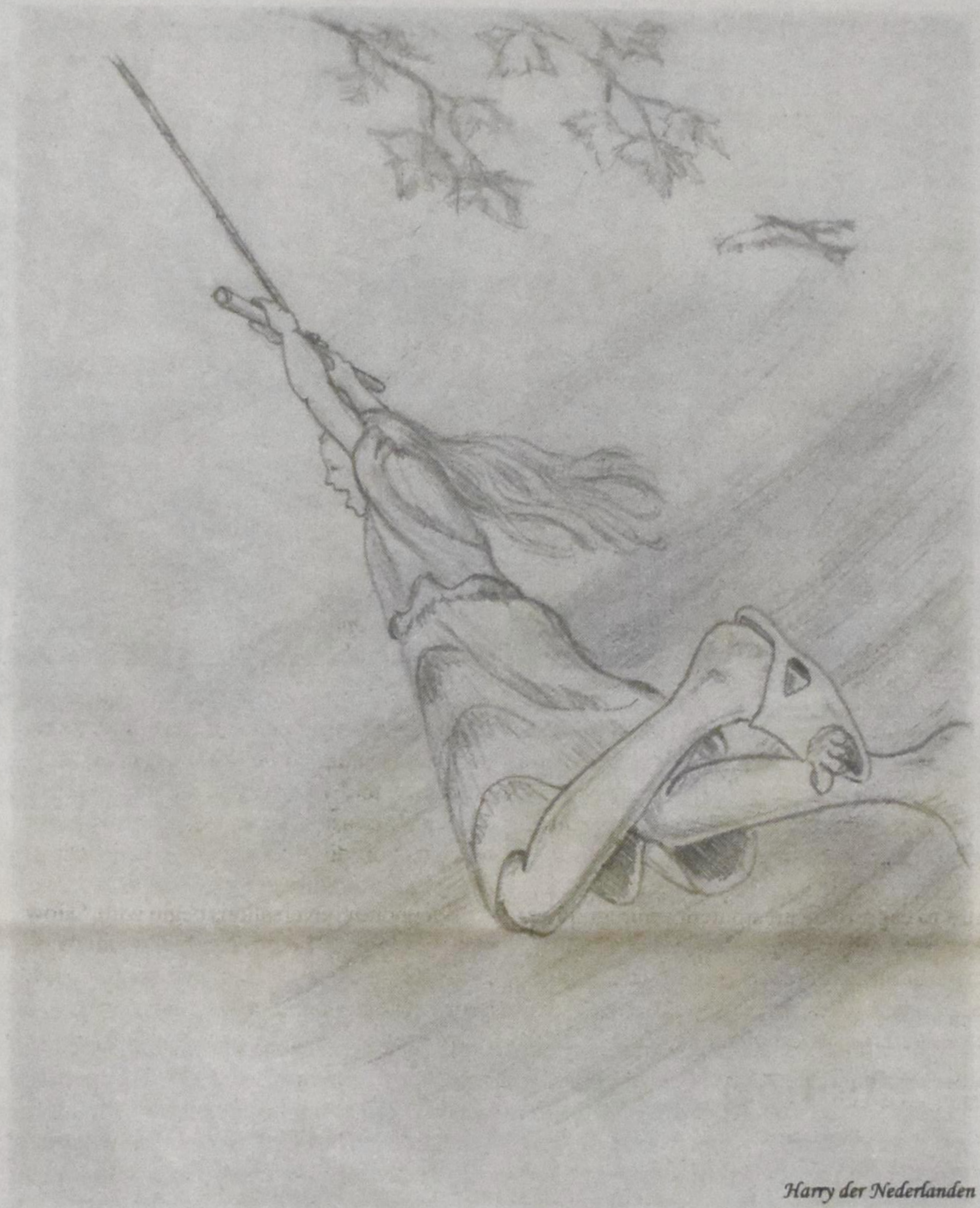
However, I think the Preacher's warning to banish anxiety from our hearts should also bring to mind another train of thought. Is it nothing more than advice to be lighthearted and superficial, to simply overlook what life and the actions of others might bring? Or does the Preacher have something else in mind?

There is also an anxiety and sorrow that surges up out of the hidden depths of our hearts. It is not caused by others. Nor does it come from life as such. People may be perfectly kind and friendly toward us. Life may be sunshine and clear skies in all directions. And still it all comes to us with a bitter taste. This may be due to a certain powerlessness, perhaps even a certain reluctance, on our part to enjoy it. We find it impossible to be completely happy. We feel anxious. We worry about everything. All we see is the meaninglessness of things. We despair of the coming of light. A dark night envelops our spirits or our hearts.

This shadow can overcome a single individual, or it can overcome an entire generation and an entire society. Isn't this true of the present generation, at least in the West? We are unable to banish anxiety from our hearts.

One might respond that there's good reason for our anxiety. We have seen numerous senseless wars, and we feel our entire way of life to be fragile and unsustainable. What is the purpose of our lives? Isn't everything relative? When we look closely, isn't it all meaningless? Isn't the very essence of things ruled by ambiguity and contradiction? How then can anyone be truly happy? Serious novelists and film makers keep mining these anxieties that stalk human life and that fill our hearts with sadness.

We might conclude that this is the way to the deepest levels of the human spirit. Isn't it true that the human race is overshadowed by despair? Isn't this the pagan attitude that stalks us all – that we are ready to despair of the world?



*Harry der Nederlanden*

But the faith of Israel and the gospel brought by the apostles have for centuries led us to believe in the ultimate meaningfulness of life. This gospel has made us happy as kids. We in the West once believed in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. But in our time that faith is fading. The dikes of this heartwarming dogma of the church have broken and we are being flooded by paganism. We find it ever more difficult to banish anxiety from our hearts.

The Preacher is acquainted with the many realities that give rise to despair. He sums them up in the saying: youth and vigor are meaningless. Life and the world may seem to be beautiful. They may glitter and shine. At times we may think we're strolling in Paradise or in the City of God. But everything lasts but for a brief moment. Taken together, it is no more than a sigh of the wind. It passes in the blink of an eye, and then everything collapses. It collapses in death.

The Preacher shares this insight with paganism and points it out very emphatically. The whole book of Ecclesiastes is filled with examples. It is the repeated refrain of his book: Meaningless! Meaningless! Everything is meaningless!

But the remarkable thing is that the Preacher manages to exploit this insight into the meaninglessness of everything to motivate us when he admonishes us to banish anxiety and sorrow from our hearts. He urges us to do so as much as possible, for soon the opportunity will be past. Life is short, so it is important to get out of it all the joy you can.

Behind this observation, of course, is his confidence that the light of life and the darkness of death are not facets or elements of fate. They are ordained by God. This is too high for us; we cannot fathom the ways of God. But we must respect, honor and bow before them because they are the decisions of our Creator God. He is free and sovereign. He is wise and good. It is he who soon brings us to the dust, but he has also meted out to each of us a handbreadth of light and life.

So we ought not to play off the one against the other – death against life. We must not hold life down in the shadow of death. To do so is to wield the name of the Lord for our own vanity, for then we use his name in vain. It is like cursing our whole life long. We must take both life and death, each on its own and beside each other. We must take both as part of the high, unfathomable things ordained by our Creator.

Therefore, we must seek to banish any despair about life that may arise from the depths of death. We ought to enjoy life as long as it has been given to us. It is genuinely something that has been given. It is a gift, a gift from our Creator. And he also allows us to take pleasure in being here.

There is something pure about this perspective. Life is genuinely life. Our existence is real. And we may rejoice in that without any reservations. It is, of course, not the only thing. So it is not absolute. We live but for a time. There is also death.

All our despair arises from a desire for absoluteness, but that is not what we have been given. We are not the Creator; we are his creatures. And therefore we should rejoice in that fact with a joy that is pure, untainted by the bitter wormwood of death.

The Preacher pushes us even further. He doesn't just say, "Banish sorrow from your heart"; he adds, "And cast off the troubles of your body." That's easier said than done, of course. Aren't we helpless over against our bodies? Isn't our bodily health under constant attack by corruption? Aren't all those numerous diseases invasions of death into our lives?

The Preacher is, of course, fully aware of this; nevertheless, he says, "Cast off the troubles of your body." He must mean, for you to enjoy yourself when you are healthy; don't invite illnesses in by worrying about them. We are also to take care of our bodies, make use of medical science, and remember that faith also has healing properties for our bodies.

Nevertheless, it is still true that bodily health as such is meaningless. It is given us only for a time. The living body will end up as a corpse. We are dust and to dust we shall return. In his sovereignty God also brings down the strongest and the most beautiful. We must respect that and we must accept it. In the long run, we must come to peace with it.

But this is not yet the peace we have in Jesus Christ. For Christ arose from the dead, bodily. And he awakens in us, too, the expectation of the resurrection of the body.

But we cannot now see very deeply into that hope. We can barely look past our death. But pass through it we must, and therefore we must also make peace with that fact.

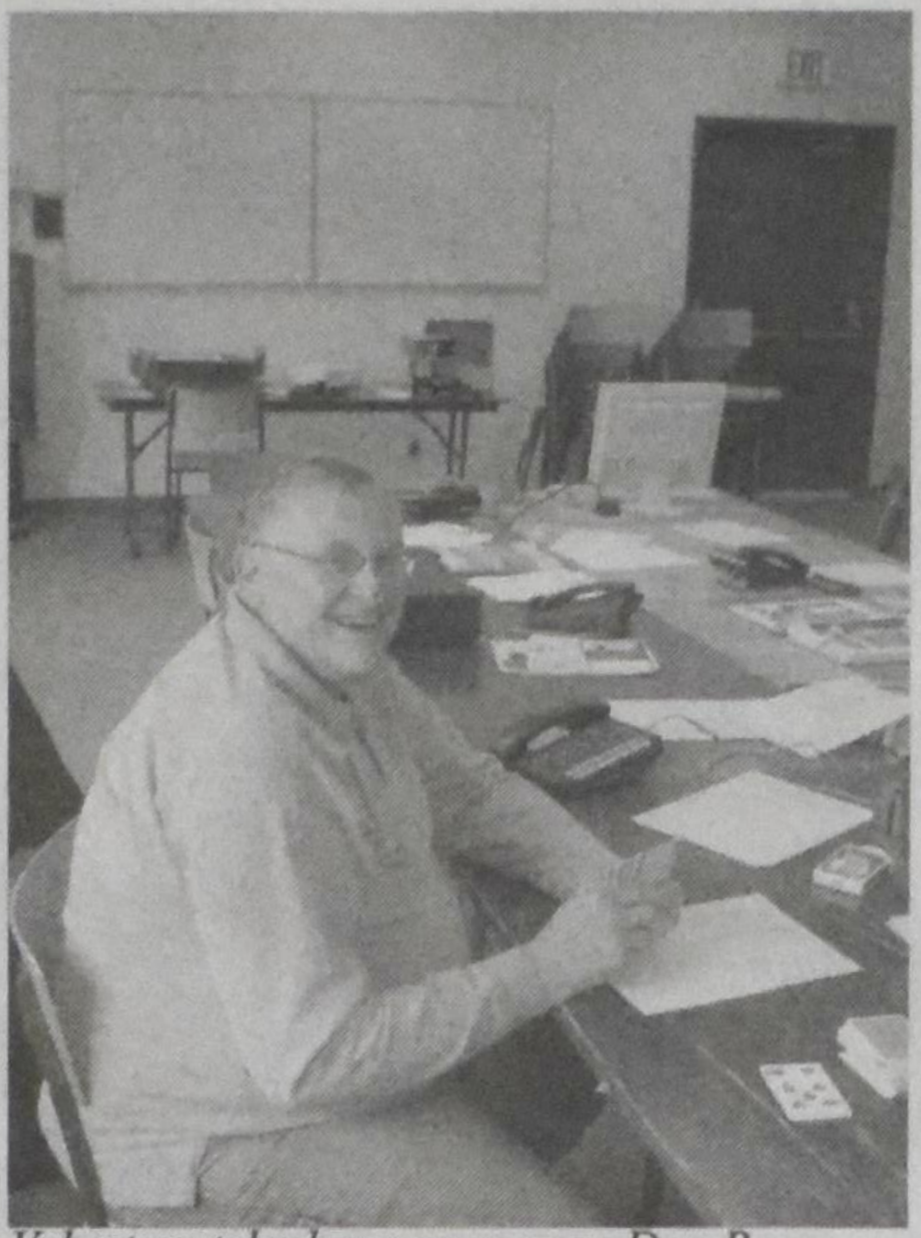
Yet, this peace, this trust, must not in turn cast a shadow on the way we experience our bodily health and strength for the time these are given to us. We must also ward off troubles and diseases from our bodies, for our bodies are also a gift from our Creator. Although we must not absolutize that gift, we must savour it purely as a gift in itself.

"Acts of God"



# Not a flood story

Looking at Bulkley River bridge from dyke in front of the Telkwa town hall toward the sandbagged boat launch.



Volunteer telephone answerers Don Ross whiled away the time by playing cards.

Rita Meerdink McBride: "some community, eh?"

The Great Bulkley River Flood of 2007 is past. The damage has been done; rebuilding has begun. But the pain of loss continues. Homes destroyed, fields reshaped or simply gone. Heirlooms damaged. Even fish – steelhead waiting to spawn – suffer and die from sand-blasted gills.

At times, it seems as if only the carrion crows, ravens, and other scavengers profit.

But there is great wisdom in Telkwa's Rita Meerdink McBride's terse statement: "Great community, eh?" Between exhaustion and a migraine, Rita – Telkwa's Emergency Social Services Co-ordinator – found something positive, something hopeful, something lovely: a great community.

Care, support, concern, and hard work are hard to capture by an amateur photographer. But quite ordinary people – what the CBC once called "everyday heroes" – are impressive in their jeans, three-day-old beards, and baseball caps. A couple tables in a firehall are messy, crammed with loose pages of foolscap. Phone lines run here and there, computers hum, while the most-used technological tool is a pencil. In the midst of a natural disaster there are down-times of outright boredom; time for a card game; or reading an unlikely novel.

Telephone conversations begin with, "How may I help you?" And Randy Cunningham, Emergency Operations Co-ordinator, ends each with this: "I appreciate your support."

The story of this flood is not the story of a natural disaster, but of a supernatural phenomenon: a community of people working together.

People blessing instead of cursing each other,
practicing hospitality,
mourning with each other,
rejoicing at small victories together.
People working without class distinctions,
living in harmony,
sharing the load.

I wouldn't wish a flood on anyone. But I'd wish a *community* on everyone.

# Flooded...slandered...libelled

*I do not know much about gods; but I think*
*that the river*
*Is a strong brown god –*
T.S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets*

Strong and brown it certainly is. The Bulkley River, the Morice, the Telkwa; and the creeks – Buck Creek, Deep Creek, Canyon Creek – and the brooks and becks, rivulets and tributary streams; the seepages, oozings, trickles, and overflowing puddles. Brown, brown, brown. And put together – strong, if not quite a *god*.

By the time this report gets in print, the worst will be over: the waters retreated into the ground, the rivers to their banks, the people to their homes. One hopes, however, that some wisdom may be left behind, some silt to nourish further reflection, perhaps even hope.

*****

The winter of 2006 started in October. In the Bulkley Valley that meant up to a metre of snow fell early, before any significant frost. Unripened tree branches, sometimes still holding some leaves, bowed and bent. Skiiers rejoiced and roads crews groaned.

And the winter continued for five long months. A few cold days, but many of snow, rain, sleet. After a summer of severe drought, dry wells, and hay crops 1/5 of normal, the moisture was a blessing. And the lack of frost meant that the moisture would be able to soak in and refill the subterranean channels, rather than just running off. So, driving aside, the heavy snowfall was a blessing for many.

Spring came in fits and starts, allowing the lowland snow to percolate through the soil. But every day that summer delayed, fears of a sudden hot spell grew. The mountain snowpack was 154 per cent of normal. That means, in some places, up to twenty feet of snow. While the valley was green and lush, a white menace waited in crystalline beauty.

Then that "strong brown god" appeared, implacable, humourless, uncaring, unfeeling. Pouring through the countryside of Quick, B.C. at 1000 cubic metres per second, forcing families living near the bridge to evacuate: none of that was exactly beautiful.

*****

What have we learned? As the related article suggests, goodness can be experienced in the midst of misfortune.

For those people who believe that God speaks – and teaches us – through his creation, we may find that a flood gives us pause, an opportunity to think through our lives on this earth.

1. When we pray about weather, what are we really doing? If we love skiing and pray for snow, snow, and snow, what are we saying about those people (and other creatures) for whom snow may mean future loss, pain, or death? In an era of climate change, doesn't the *Book of Common Prayer* give us a wise model:

*O God, heavenly Father, who through thy Son Jesus Christ hast promised to them that seek first thy kingdom and righteousness all things necessary to their bodily sustenance: Send us, we beseech thee, such seasonable weather that we may receive the fruits of the earth to our comfort and to thy honour; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.* ***Amen.***

"Seasonable" weather, not "my kind of weather," not Alberta weather or Georgia weather or California weather, but the weather patterns to which we have adapted our lives.

*My daughter Becca at the Telkwa bridge. (She lives in Inuvik, in a delta that is 150 miles wide, and on the second largest river system in the Americas – after the Amazon and the Missouri-Mississippi complex. She stands here next to a mighty small brown god.)*

2. Have we been insensitived to tragedy by mass communications? Isn't there something cheapening about our conversations when they begin with: "Did you see what that tornado did in Kansas?" "Did you hear about the tsunami in Thailand and Indonesia?" "Did you see what the flood did to Zandberg's farm?" Perhaps we need to bite our tongues until we can empathize before we talk (or pray) about pain and loss. Perhaps we need to watch less television, including fewer news stories, and work to develop our senses through reading novels and allow ourselves to be moved through our imaginations.

*Continued on p. 17*

## Other places

BuildingTrust
Vicky Van Andel Ed.

# A road less taken

This will be a short column. I just got back from Italy, am staying in Toronto, still feel jet lagged, and hope to go to Grand Rapids later today to attend Synod 2007. But I want to share a few events of my trip while they are still fresh in my mind. There were many highlights. For three weeks my senses were in overdrive. Don't worry this won't be a travel log.

What stood out for me?

It was a thrill to wake up every morning to the tunes of birds in cypress trees, mostly swallows. There are millions of swallows in Italy. They reminded me of the swallows often referred to in the Bible. They must also be abundant in the Middle East.

Another thing that fascinated me was the sound of church bells. They rang early in the morning every day, in every town and city we stayed at. Such peace they provoke, such community and harmony! Some bells chime every hour, others even every 15 minutes. Once, while we were sitting on a square in Ravello, on the Amalfi Coast, a sudden chorus of bells burst forth from every direction. It was 12 o'clock noon on a Sunday. I'll never forget the incredible chorus and the complete surprise of it in that beautiful setting.

Traveling through the country visiting old hill top villages and walking the narrow streets captivated me every day again. The beauty of God's creation jumped out at me. I felt grateful. The weather warmed our souls and the sun, and also sometimes the rain, soothed our bodies.

We slept in monasteries. Before our trip, almost by accident, I ran into a book called *Monasteries in Italy*. Over the past decade or so, many monasteries are using their facilities to serve as hotels or conference centers. They offer cheaper lodging than hotels, and tend to be situated in quiet places.

So, book in hand, we traveled around the country, reserving places to stay a day in advance, depending on how we felt. This left us free to spend the time we needed to explore each place. We usually stayed two or three nights in the same monastery. It was a hugely successful way of traveling through Italy. Every monastery had interesting histories and pleasant surprises.

Meeting the different people living in the monasteries also added to our enjoyment. Anna was the first person we met in a monastery in San Miniato. Still naïve about what to expect, I asked her if she was a nun, even though she wasn't dressed like one (I had seen a black habit on the clothes line though).

She burst out laughing. "No, I just work here," she said. "I am the only person who can speak a bit of English. I am a sister, just like you," pointing at me. "We are both sisters," she said, showing me her wedding ring.

Still laughing I heard her tell the story to a co-worker. Anna let me do my laundry and use the clothesline strung between columns and arches of the inner courtyard. She even added some extra clothes pegs during the day to protect the clothes from the wind – her touch of caring. We saw no real nuns in this monastery.

A few days later we stayed in a large white four-story villa in Sorrento situated on a hill overlooking the sea. It had a wide verandah with a magnificent view. A woman named Maria explained the details of lodging there to us. In her thirties, she was polite, soft spoken and gentle. After a few days she confided that she was an artist and lived near Assisi. She had needed a rest and decided to stay with the nuns for a month. She was leaving the next day.

She told us that five nuns lived in this rambling building. The oldest was 92 and the youngest in her early fifties. Maria's job for the past month had been to help the nuns. Laughingly she told us that she had learned enough this past month to last her a lifetime. It had been very good, she said, but she was anxious to go home.

The nuns spoke no English. We did see a nun on the computer and another drive a car. Three nuns prayed in the chapel next to our breakfast table every morning. They filed passed us in order. One nun always smiled at us, the others remained serious. One day they slept in and prayed later.

One other quick story. We stayed in a monastery built on top of the cave where St. Benedict spent three years of his life reflecting on the evils of the world and his own sins. (The local story is that he pined for a woman and his broken heart healed only after he threw himself on thorn bushes below the cave. How human a story for a holy saint!). The monastery is situated on a hill overlooking Subiaco. Benedict eventually wrote the Rules of St. Benedict which are still followed today. He is believed to have been able to perform miracles. He had a sister named Scolastica.

One day Benedict agreed to visit with Scolastica. She had not seen him for a while and was very happy. At the end of the day Benedict wanted to go home. Scolastica pleaded with him to stay because she had looked forward to his coming. But Benedict insisted he had to go because the monks needed him.

Then the sky suddenly filled with black clouds and it began to rain. Benedict became annoyed. Scolastica told him she had prayed for a miracle to keep him there, and clearly God was answering her prayer.

The book which tells the story states that it is clear Scolastica's love for God was greater at that moment than Benedict's and therefore her prayer was answered over his. They spent a few very good days together. Four days later Scolastica died, and Benedict even though he was not with her, is said to have felt her soul go to heaven the moment she died.

These are a just a few of my impressions. I'm off to synod. Blessings.

*Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via e-mail at: vickyv@telus.net*

## Darkness *. . . cont. from p. 11*

the carpet. What is the matter with you. You enter into a Gentile's house and to make it even worse you baptize him? Have you gone out of your mind? You an apostle.

And then there is that answer of Peter recorded in Acts 9 verse 16:

"I remembered what the Lord had said." See how the light, how Jesus can and will shed light in the confusion that often blocks our decision making.

There is one more observation that we should not miss. That verse five: "The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it."

You note that there is that little letter *a* at the end of that verse. It means look at the footnote. And what does the footnote say? It says another perfect translation is: the darkness has not overcome it.

Many versions prefer that translation. And it touches my heart. I remembered that horrible scene in Gethsemane: Jesus arrested. The hour of darkness Jesus called it. Certainly there was lack of understanding. The temple police and the religious establishment did not understand, did not want to understand that Jesus was the long-expected messiah. No, the darkness did not understand and it looked like the end had come. But the darkness did not triumph.

That Gethsemane hour of darkness repeats itself in history. In every age again you meet it. The hour of darkness. Trace the story of humanity and you see darkness. The concentration camps of the earlier century are just one occurrence in a long trail of evil and death.

I came back from a memorial service in which we remembered those of my division killed in battle. The earth is covered with war cemeteries. Endless rows of crosses. The earth is stained with the blood that darkness caused to flow. The current cruelties of warfare are like a chapter in a never-ending book.

Certainly at the bottom of it is not understanding, not wanting to follow God's will. Yes, the darkness does not understand the light. But you know what – the darkness will not conquer it either.

Through all the pitch black darkness of our time and our history shines the light that will not be extinguished. And in the end the light will totally swallow up the darkness and swords be beaten into plow shares and the prince of peace will reign.

Until that time remember what Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "Live then as children of the light."

# Flooding . . . continued from page 15

3. Rumours and gossip have one thing in common: they thrive on the immediate attention that the speaker gets, while portraying little real concern for the well-being of others. When getting instructions on working in the emergency operations centre in Telkwa, I heard again and again that "most of last night" was spent in dispelling rumours: that there was a power line floating in the river; that there was a big ice dam far upstream that – when it broke – would flood the whole town; that the power will be out for five days.

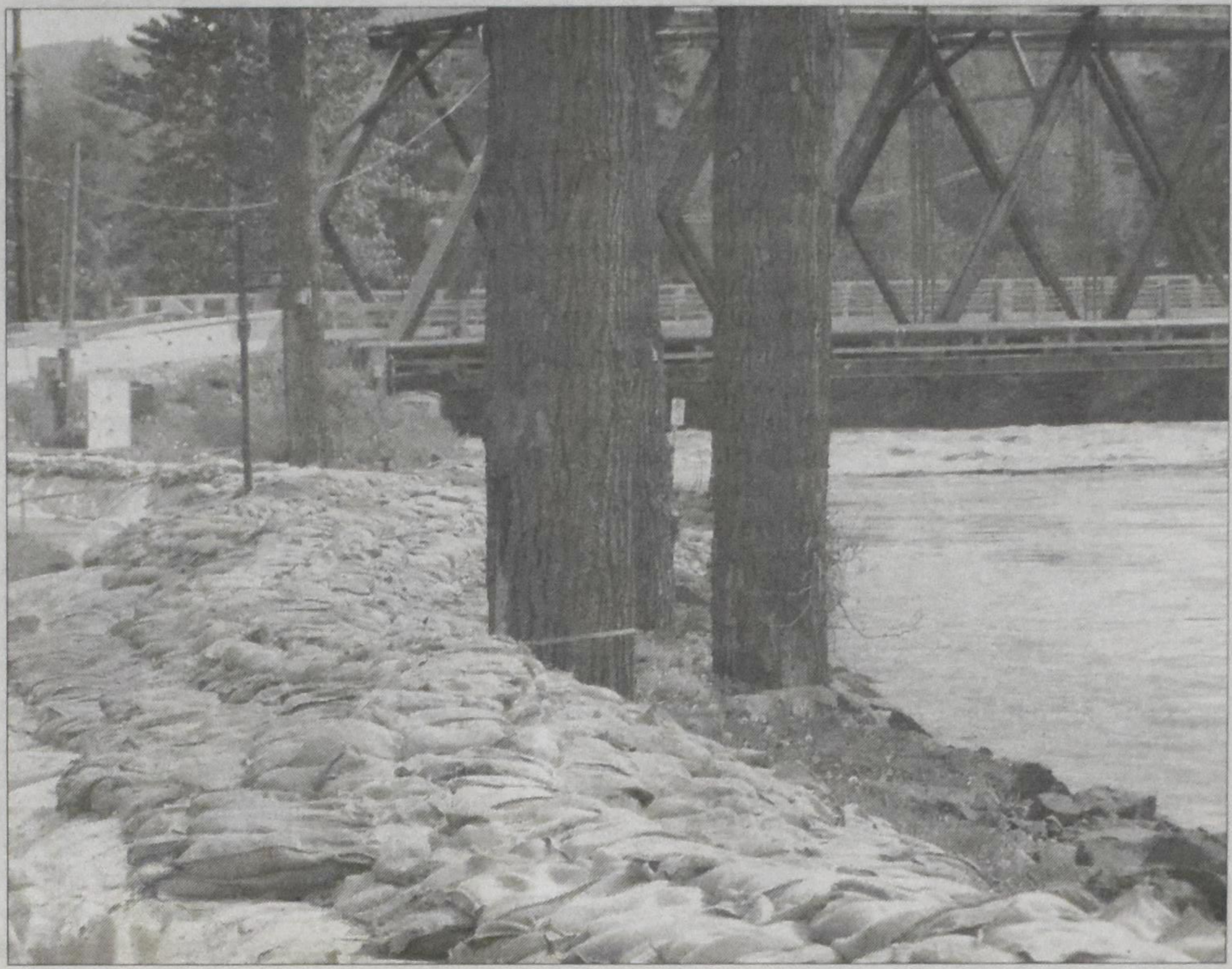
4. It does little good to play the *blame game* in the midst of turmoil. Tom Dall, Telkwa's town manager, was certainly not encouraged when people called him to say: "Why didn't people build dykes and things better *back then* [in 1890 or 1910 or 1935]?" Perhaps people think Tom has a time machine?

5. In many parts of the world, the pioneer days are over. Here, in central British Columbia, people still live where they wrest, tease, or coax a living from the earth. European immigrants who came with nothing but inherited patterns of living often built on flood plains. Not our First Nations neighbours: most of them had summer and winter campsites; they had several dwellings with sites chosen according to a knowledge of long-range weather patterns.

People in parts of The Netherlands learned to survive flooding by building mounds of shelters, called *terps*. Later, however, they simply built better and better machines and better and better dykes. Whether this is a permanent solution for them is not, perhaps, for us to say, but it seems logical that in North America many changes in land-use are in order. In many parts of the world, zoning laws now forbid certain activities, certain types of building, on flood plains. Maybe we need to wake up.

We who claim "to have ears to hear" need to hear what the Creator-Spirit is saying to the churches.

*Curt Gesch is a retired teacher living in Telkwa, British Columbia.*



# Resisting a culture . . . continued from page 6

One Sunday morning Darwish watched a televised church service where the preacher read from I Corinthian 13, about love that is patient, kind, not envious, or self-seeking, does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth.... She was amazed, and began with her family to attend a Christian church where she found a community of people within which they felt blessed. Instead of hatred for the Other, she found that Christians are called to love and to pray even for those who call them infidels.

In August 2001, together with her husband and three children, she visited Egypt after her absence of 23 years. She was happy to meet her close relatives including her mother again, and they enjoyed the sightseeing of interesting and historic places. But she was heart-broken about the many changes for the worse. The poverty and hardship of the people had worsened, and so had the chaos and the decay of the infrastructure.

Worst of all, she found that radical Islam, enforced by increasing control over the lives of people, had become more influential. Some of her friends, who had worn Western dress, now were covered from head to toe, and they treated her with suspicion. The hostility to the West had become more pronounced, eagerly promoted in the mosques and the controlled media.

Darwish left Egypt with deep pessimism about its future and a profound concern for the well-being of her people. She was so happy to return to the land that had given her freedom that she felt like kissing the ground on her arrival back in Los Angeles. That was September 10, 2001.

## No longer silent

The next morning, September 11, they awoke to the news of the dreadful massacres in New York, Washington, and the Pennsylvania countryside. This hit her very hard, first of all for the loss of 3000 innocent lives and its impact on the entire nation. But she was also saddened that Arab culture had stooped to this measure of madness.

She was more downhearted when she canvassed members of her family and a number of acquaintances back in Egypt. Everyone she spoke with had little sympathy for the victims, and many saw this attack as something the Israelis or the Americans themselves had masterminded. Or they felt that Americans had this coming to them. They were all angry with her for thinking that Arabs had perpetrated this attack on America.

Darwish faced the reality that she was totally disconnected from the Arab/Muslim world. But there was worse to come. When she began to speak with fellow Arab Americans, she mostly encountered indifference and even fear for speaking out against the ruthless attackers of America. Nonetheless, she made up her mind to publicly defend America against its enemies. She realized that doing so would bring trouble and opposition from Islamists, radical Muslims and even from moderate Arabs and Muslims. She writes:

*But the time of silence, of being afraid to speak out, was over for me from the day the planes hit the twin towers. After seeing 3,000 fellow Americans killed in an instant, I had to stand up for America.*

She began by writing a few articles, then was invited to an ever growing number of conferences and meetings, in the course of which she met many appreciative people in person and by email. But many of the responders from the Arab world asked her not to post their letters of support.

## The right thing to do

She also made up her mind to work closely with the Jewish people because she thought it was simply the right and honourable thing to do.

In 2004, she traveled to Israel where she received a warm welcome. Here was the daughter of an Egyptian military officer, a martyr in the war against Israel, who made a complete turn around and now is a defender of this beleaguered, tiny country in an ocean of Arab hatred. Her worries that she might be looked at with suspicion proved to be totally unfounded.

Her web site ArabsforIsrael.com has a list of statements that describe what the Arab and Muslim signatories believe about Israel. It is a plea for the peaceful coexistence of a free and democratic Israel and a similar country for the Palestinian people.

In a final chapter, "The Challenge for America," the author issues a strong warning against the widespread naiveté about the real threat of radical Islam, especially in the academic and media world in America. She warns against the inroads of fanatical preachers who use the freedom of America to promote a culture that would destroy those very freedoms

Darwish is convinced that Arab Muslims and non-Muslims should give priority attention to, 1) Since freedom of religion is the key to the reformation of Islam, the law that forbids Muslims from changing religion must be abrogated; 2) The Arab world must stop blaming the West, America, and Israel for all the problems of the Middle East and begin to accept responsibility for its own failings; 3) American Muslims must take control of their mosques away from the Islamic fanatics, and cut their ties with Saudi Arabia's money and leadership.

She has found encouragement and support though a great deal of that has been from people who are afraid to stand up, not only in the Islamic countries but even in the free West. She has also been maligned, especially by fellow American Muslims who consider her a traitor. She has been treated rudely by Muslim thugs, shouted down at meetings, and barred from speaking at certain events.

The University of Guelph (Canada) has the dubious distinction of having cancelled her speech in early 2006 after the local Muslim student association accused her of being a hate-monger and demanded that she not be allowed to speak.

*Now They Call me Infidel* is a moving story of a courageous, extraordinary woman. It has a message of great urgency for our time, because it provides an inside look at a culture that is a mystery to Westerners but that has been the ruin of entire nations.

This book is written with conviction and honesty, and above all in spirit of love and compassion. My advice: order this book today, read it, and pass it on.

*Harry Antonides*
hantonides@sympatico.ca

Reflections

**Welcome to my perch**
Bert Witvoet

# Robben Island diet

Bert Witvoet

Towards the very end of our stay in South Africa, Ike and Jennie Witteveen and Alice and I visited Robben Island just off Capetown. We visited the prison and the cell that held well-known leader Nelson Mandela. We all know that during the days of Apartheid the inhabitants of South Africa were classified according to race or skin colour.

There were basically three groups: Whites, Coloureds (which includes Mulattoes and Asiatics) and Bantus, also known as Blacks. Now, you must know that there were no white political prisoners on Robben Island during the days of Apartheid, only Coloured and Black political prisoners. Even in the matter of assigning prisons the government policy of separate development was observed.

A former political prisoner on Robben Island, Mbatha, showed us around. He took us to Nelson Mandela's small cell. To see that bare and confined space (6 by 7 feet?) behind heavy bars is quite a stirring experience. But what really hit me during that visit, and what drove home in a powerful way the evil of Apartheid was the diet chart this prisoner held up for us.

Part of the daily diet chart looked like this:

| Coloureds and Asiatics | Bantus (Blacks) |
|---|---|
| Fat: 1 oz. per person | Fat: 1/2 oz per person |
| Meat: 6 oz. per person | Meat: 5 oz per person |
| Jam/Syrup: 1 oz per person | No Jam or Syrup |
| Sugar: 2 oz per person | Sugar: 1 1/2 oz per person |
| Coffee for breakfast & supper | Coffee for breakfast only |

What this diet chart showed us was that the government did not only want to keep the various groups separate, but they also wanted to rank the groups: whites were superior to coloureds, coloureds were superior to blacks. What a dehumanizing way of showing the supposed inferiority of blacks by legislating one ounce less of meat, 1/2 ounce less of fat, no jam or syrup, half an ounce less of sugar, and coffee only for breakfast.

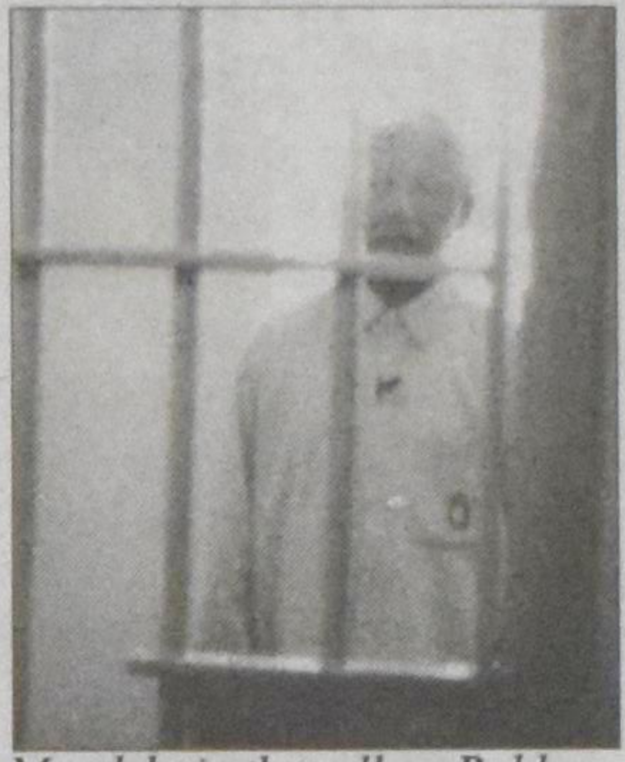
In these little details I saw the monster that was Apartheid better than I had ever before.

### They should have known

How could this have happened? How could this dehumanizing practice have developed in a civilized country? Behind it was a desire for power on the part of the whites, of course. Many of the whites, many of them Calvinists,

*At the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk in Capetown: from l. to r. Bert Witvoet, Alice Witvoet, Ike Witteveen, Pastor Bertus Vander Westhuyzen.*

*Our guide, Mbatha, addresses a group of visitors in a community cell before showing the diet chart.*



*Mandela in the cell on Robben Island he occupied for 18 years*

believed that they had a God-given right to rule, and that by way of their nature, they were superior.

Witness this unbelievable statement made in the South African Parliament on March 115, 1950: "The white man is the master in South Africa, and the white man, from the very nature of his origins, from the very nature of his birth, and from the very nature of his guardianship, will remain master in South Africa to the end." (House of Assembly Debates, 15/3/50 col. 3610). You know what is so amazing about post-Apartheid South Africa? We noticed very little hatred of the white Afrikaner population among the blacks.

Many Afrikaners say they did not know. And that's partly true. The excesses by security forces who were carrying out government policies were hidden. It reminds you of the Nazis and their concentration camps. But in another way, these Afrikaners should have known better. The evil spirit of Apartheid was evident even without knowing about the excesses. Many Afrikaners knew and understood what was wrong with Apartheid. They were opposed to Apartheid from the start. But the majority approved of the basic concept that blacks should be kept separate and should be treated as inferior.

### Post Apartheid

Even today you can find two kinds of Afrikaners as they experience the post-Apartheid period.

One such person is pastor Albertus Vander Westhuyzen from the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk in Capetown. He and I have the good fortune of having the same first name: Albertus. He usually goes by the name Bertus and I go by the name Bert. It's not often that we find someone else with the name Albertus. When we found out we had the same name, we embraced. What else can you do when you find someone with such a great name?

In his sermon, Albertus preached on how the Afrikaners have lost their privileged position. That was necessary, he said. Christ teaches us how we must operate out of weakness. He quoted 2 Corinthians 12:10: "That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed and to yeast, he said. Small beginnings have great outcomes.

### Grieving the loss

One thing that Albertus said to us after the service has stuck with me. "Afrikaners need to grieve their loss of privilege and power," he said. "We need to grieve what we have lost, and what we have lost is significant."

This pastor was referring not only to the fact that whites have lost a lot of power and influence in South Africa, which they have. But also, a lot of things in South Africa are not working very well. There is a lot of crime among youth, and there is a lot of corruption on the part of officials. Many processes are failing at the moment. Critical power failures are common. We experienced two while we were there for four weeks. Government agencies are notoriously inefficient today. All kinds of stories of people getting the wrong passports, licensing bureaus being bogged down so that people can't get their license renewed in time are reported in newspapers. Because of affirmative action people who are not necessarily qualified end up running farms or businesses.

It's hard to see a system that used to work very well break down. One needs to grieve that kind of loss.

I also met Afrikaners who did not grieve the loss of privilege. They hated what was happening to their country. They feel like a threatened minority. They still think that, apart from the excesses that brought about a lot of suffering for the Blacks, the Apartheid system was not a bad system. They prefer to talk about it as "separate development." These Afrikaners were not grieving what they had lost so much as bitching about it. There is a vast difference between grieving and bitching. Those who bitch miss the fleshpots of Egypt. We see the same phenomenon in post Communist Russia. A large segment of the population laments the loss of socialism. They measure the current situation against the more secure past era of socialism. In South Africa, too, we met a lot of Afrikaners who see mostly the negative things of the post-Apartheid period.

What I liked about the position taken by Pastor Albertus was that he saw the new era as a time when white Christians can practise the art of living out of weakness. He saw that as a very Christ-like thing.

### An attitude of hope

Which brings me to the positive side of grieving. Those who grieved were also the most hopeful. Those who bitched were pessimistic about the future of South Africa. Why is it that those who grieve are hopeful? They stress the new opportunities that a position of powerlessness affords. They look further down the road. They trust in God to bring renewal and improvement. It's like what another positive Afrikaner preacher we heard, Gerrit VanderMerve, said in his sermon about the 10 spies who brought back reports to Moses of the situation in Canaan. Eight of the spies said "It can't be done." Two said, "It can be done." There was a majority report and a minority report. Both groups looked at the same facts. Nothing was different about the facts. But the majority said, "These people are too powerful for us. We looked like grasshoppers next to them." But Joshua and Caleb said, "Don't be afraid of these people. God is on our side." A pessimistic view and a hopeful view. This preacher was a preacher of hope also about South Africa.

### Jesus and a diet chart

My thoughts go back to the diet chart on Robben Island. Jesus would absolutely condemn such a chart. This, I think, is what a diet chart in Jesus' hands would look like:

For everyone – young and old, male and female, white, coloured and black:

Jam and Syrup

For Jesus himself: No jam and no syrup.

"For he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant." And he says to us: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it."

*Bert Witvoet is the former editor of CC, now retired, who stays active by editing the* Christian Educators Journal *and preaching the occasional sermon.*

# Shiites rising . . . continued from page 2

popular faction, led by the nationalist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, continues its calls for the US military to leave Iraq.

The junior cleric's militia has battled twice with US forces and still skirmishes. The Mahdi Army is accused of running death squads that target Sunnis in revenge attacks. But Mr. Sadr also has loyalists in the Iraqi parliament, whose support clinched Nouri al-Maliki's bid for prime minister, making Sadr a kingmaker.

Iranian influence on its Shiite-led neighbor is deep, both in formal contacts with Iraqi leaders once exiled in Iran and with networks of agents that can be activated at any time. Some argue that when US forces pull out of Iraq, Washington will effectively be ceding the country to Iran.

But there are softer signals as well. US and Iranian officials met publicly for the first time in 27 years on May 28, with ambassadors talking for four hours about how to calm violence in Iraq. Both sides spoke of progress, but the meeting is unlikely to be the last over competing interests in Iraq.

Layers of complexity make the future allegiance of Iraqi Shiites difficult to discern. But their more immediate challenge is the Sunni insurgency, which targets Shiites as "non-Muslims" more despicable than US forces in Iraq.

"This sectarian divide will lead to civil war, [and] if that happens, it will not just be within Iraqi borders, but across all the Middle East," says Ayad Jamaladin, a moderate Shiite parliamentarian and cleric in Baghdad. Mideast countries "are weak. If [they] fall down, you will witness huge destruction, and it's a golden opportunity for Al Qaeda."

Some Shiite death squads have tortured and killed up to 100 Sunnis a day in Baghdad alone. The current "surge" of US forces into the capital is meant to cut those numbers, and for a time, it did.

But the sectarian poison that courses between the two branches of Islam was on display as Hussein was taunted at the gallows by Shiite hangmen.

### An American hand in the Shiite rise

Ironically, analysts say, it has been the way America has pursued the war on terror since 2001 that has facilitated the current rise of Shiites in Iran and Iraq – both charter members of President Bush's "axis of evil" – and boosted their prospects in Lebanon.

When the US toppled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001 and then invaded Iraq to overthrow Hussein in 2003, it erased Iran's two most troublesome neighbors.

Tehran feared it was "next" in line for US-engineered regime change, prompting a secret offer to discuss all outstanding issues – from support for militants to nuclear issues – with Washington.

Buoyed by the swift fall of Baghdad, the White House refused. But as America became bogged down in Iraq, Iran's fear gave way to assertiveness. Its deep influence in Iraq has made Tehran the "winner" of the Iraq war.

"What we see as rising Shiite power is not because of anything the Shiites have done, but because of mistakes of the US," says Mehdi Karroubi, a former speaker of Iran's parliament and presidential candidate. "These are because of the occupation of Iraq and US actions in Lebanon."

"Our power is becoming clearer to the world," agrees Abolhasan Navvab, a prominent cleric in Tehran close to Iran's supreme religious leader. "We don't want to make war or follow hard-liners like bin Laden or Al Qaeda. We are not into making problems for America," he says, adding that Iran's nuclear power project should be accepted. "But we will not give up."

Still, Iran's role as catalyst may be finite. "There is no strategy of empowering the Shiites ... but an attempt to stop US designs on Iran," says a Western-educated Iranian analyst in Tehran, who asked not to be named. "Iran will try to influence where she is trusted, and that's with Shiite groups.

"When you talk of [Iran's] regional power, where is it? West Beirut, Baghdad, Basra, maybe the man on the street in Cairo," says the analyst. "But that soft power can disappear in days."

And it resonates, nonetheless. "When you say: 'Americans are in my home,' it means 'What are you doing there?' Everyone in the Middle East understands this," says Mohsen Kadivar, a reformist cleric in Tehran. "We should thank Mr. Bush for giving us this gift of unity. If Bush makes another mistake and invades Persia, [unity] will be greater than now. This attack against Iran is what fundamentalists in Iran want."

Pentagon officials say that US forces are not preparing to strike Iran and instead have signaled a range of steps to engage Tehran. But the White House does not rule out military action.

"If they attack [Iran], they would unleash and awaken the deep, deep roots and causes of martyrdom," says Ibrahim Mussawi, a former Hizbullah spokesman and magazine editor in Beirut. "This would be the start of the end of US hegemony."

### Sunni fears of the Shiite rise

Alarmed Sunni leaders, the traditional holders of power in the Arab world, are warning of a "Shiite Crescent" forming across the region, and of sectarian conflict spreading with it.

Even while Saudi Arabia and Iran have held meetings to calm Sunni-Shiite tension, Saudi King Abdullah warned in January that, "We are aware of the dimensions of spreading Shiism and where it has reached."

The Shiite spread "will not achieve its goal," the monarch told a Kuwaiti newspaper, because Sunnis "seem immune to any attempts by other sects to penetrate or diminish its historical power."

Saudi Arabia is a US ally that follows the austere Wahhabi strain of Sunnism and produced 15 of the 19 attackers on 9/11. In December, Riyadh told Washington it would back Sunni insurgents in Iraq if Iran's influence

there grew. Saudi cleric Abdul Rahman al-Barak, in a religious ruling, called Shiites "the worst of the Islamic nation's sects" and "infidels."

Al Qaeda, too, sees growing Shiite strength as a threat. In a video broadcast last month, Al Qaeda No. 2 Ayman al-Zawahiri lambasted Iraqi Shiites in the government as the "spearhead of the Americans and their claw with which they combat the Mujahideen and torture the Muslims."

Sunni Arab leaders worry that their people associate them with the Western camp, while Iran's Ahmadinejad and Lebanon's Nasrallah are seen as the defenders of Islam.

"There is a fearfulness, because Nasrallah ... has an incredible ability to reach out, to be believed, to be admired – indeed, to be feared – by other sects, especially Sunnis in the region," says Nicholas Noe, the Beirut-based editor of Mideastwire.com and an expert on Hizbullah speeches. There "is an attempt [by Sunnis] to shift the divide from Shiite-Sunni – because that is a dangerous divide for a lot of these regimes – to a Persian-Arab divide," he says.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas has been shouted down by his own Fatah supporters, angry about Hamas, their Iran-backed Palestinian rivals, saying, "Persians go home. Persians must die."

For many Arabs, the Persian racial slur harks back to pre-Islamic rivalry. "The Iranians know that the divide-and-conquer strategy that kills [their regional leadership] is Persians versus Arabs," says Mr. Noe.

And uncertainty about Iran's motives runs deep in the Arab world. Iran came under strong criticism at a high-level conference in Jordan in late May when Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said an Arab peace plan does not have "any chance" of success. The former Saudi ambassador to Washington, Prince Turki al-Faisal, retorted that Israeli-Palestinian peace is "an Arab issue and should be resolved within the Arab fold." And Bahraini Crown Prince Sheikh Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa said Iran should be transparent on the nuclear issue and "work in partnership with its neighbors and not at their expense."

### Battle for a new Middle East

The practitioners of confrontation cast their aims in sweeping terms. "Victory of the resistance was not only a victory of arms [over Israel, but also] a victory for the ideology and culture of the resistance," Nasrallah said in an April speech, according to a translation from Mideastwire.com. "The resistance stood in the face of this project for which they are seeking a name, i.e., the New Middle East."

Such rhetoric strikes a chord far beyond Shiite power centers. Hizbullah's victory declaration "is very important for the Shia, but also for the Sunnis in Egypt, where Hizbullah is famous and Nasrallah has become a hero," says Sabrina Mervin, an expert on Shiism at the French Institute of the Near East in Beirut.

"Now Iran is the only country in the region to face the US and this plan of a New Middle East," says Ms. Mervin. "More and more it's growing, this feeling of injustice."

Analysts say there are limits to what this axis can achieve, since each case of Shiite "power" has different roots and aims.

They don't expect the Shiite-Sunni conflict in Iraq to spill over into direct sectarian war elsewhere. Iraq's strong Arab nationalism is likely to check any Iranian effort to fully control the country.

The New Middle East, for this axis, is more about burnishing the ideal of confronting the West than pushing a strategic plan.

"What you have now is a franchising of that [resistance] ideology," says Daniel Brumberg, author of *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran*. While there is a short-term anti-US ideology taking root, competing agendas between Shiite leaders will prevent creation of a "greater Shiite, Iranian hegemony in any clear-cut sense."

Still, it does appeal. That's one reason Iran is unlikely to back down on its nuclear ambitions, say analysts, which bolsters Iran's status among allies, and unnerves enemies. "This model [of resistance] is finding its place.... When Ahmadinejad goes to any country and expresses this view to young generations, they are attentive to it," says Mr. Taraghi, the right-wing politician in Tehran. "It's like a flame that you light up in the darkness."

The original "war on terror" – against Al Qaeda alone – has now been allowed to dangerously expand, says Vali Nasr, author of *The Shia Revival*.

"We're at the point in this region [where] we can't militarily turn the dynamic," says Mr. Nasr, who teaches at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif. Al Qaeda "is not going to go away," he says, so the effort should be to examine what drives the axis of resistance, address those issues, and "bring everybody to the table again." That means talking to Hamas, to Sadr, to Syria, to Hizbullah, and even to Iran, he says, if only to return to a single-front battle against Al Qaeda.

"The more of these guys you bring in from the cold, the smaller the scope of resistance," says Nasr. "[But] if you operate on the assumption that you can crush the resistance, then you are committing yourself to perpetual war."

# Classifieds

## Anniversaries

With thanks to God we hope to celebrate our parents' **60th Wedding Anniversary**

**MELVIN AND ANN WERKMAN** (nee **Hoogeveen**)

July 3, 1947 - July 3, 2007

Children: Leo & Darleen Werkman
Shirley † Solvstan
Cathy & Joe Van Voort
Jerry & Connie Werkman
Frances & Bob Zawislak
Donald & Sandy Werkman
10 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren

Address: 76 Towncentre Drive, Townsend ON N0A 1S0

**TONY AND JEAN VERHULP (Vander Ploeg)**

Lord willing, hope to celebrate their **50th Anniversary**.
Isaiah 40:31

**Open House** July 7, 2007 from 1-3 p.m. at the Listowel Missionary Church
1205 Tremaine St South, Listowel, Ontario

Children: Arnold (deceased) & Anita Ibarra, *Abbotsford, BC*
Shirley & Dave DeVos, *Cambridge, ON*
Bryan & Christine Verhulp, *Ottawa, ON*
Sandra & Barend Spek, *Harriston, ON*
Wayne Verhulp, *Kamloops, BC*
Bruce & Lily Verhulp, *Listowel, ON*
and 19 grandchildren

Home address: 380 Winston St E, Listowel ON N4W 2T8
phone: 519-291-5359

## Wedding

With joy and thankfulness to God,
John & Kathryn Hogan and
John & Margaret Zylstra
of St. Thomas,
announce the forthcoming
marriage of their children:

**Katelyn Hogan** and **John Zylstra**

The wedding will take place on
Saturday, July 14, 2007 D.V.
@ 2:00 p.m
First Christian Reformed Church,
320 Elm Street, St. Thomas

## Thank You

In gratitude to the Lord we **thank you** our dear friends of *CC* for all the well-wishes received by card and telephone on the occasion of our 60th wedding anniversary. May the Lord bless you all.

Dirk & Marie Nanninga
Whitby ON

## Classifieds

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:** *CC* is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date.
**RATE:** (GST added to rates listed) All personal & family announcements: $6.00 per square inch. **rose@christiancourier.ca** Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: $8.00 per square inch. email: **ads@christiancourier.ca**
**PHOTOS:** There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged per square inch but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original photo (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.
**PERSONAL ADS:** *CC* would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $25. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $8 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.
**NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS:** We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *CC* and to parents who announce a child's birth in our paper. If you want to take advantage of this offer, please let us know when placing your ad.
**SUBMITTING YOUR AD**
Mail: Christian Courier
5 Joanna Drive
St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1
fax: 905-682-8313 e-mail: see above
**OTHER INFORMATION:** *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format and editing style and is not responsible for any errors due to hand-written or phoned-in advertisements.

**Free!! 30 plus Frisian books**, most of them classics. (Akkerman, Brouwer, Van Houten, Lodewyk, Cuperus) First come, first serve.
Frank de Jong, 233 Oxford St. Ingersoll ON N5C 2V8 PH: **519-485-3657**

**DUTCH SERVICE** will be held **July 22** in the Ancaster CRC at 3:00 p.m.
Rev. Harry VanderWindt will be preaching.

## Obituaries

**ANN FENNEMA** (nee **Antje Miedema**)
of Parkview Meadows, Townsend, ON.

Our mother, grandmother & great-grandmother was called home by her Lord on Tuesday May 29th in her 90th year.

Wife of the late John Fennema and beloved mother of Henry & Eunice *of Ancaster*, Andy & Ruth *of Caledonia*, Tena & Don Hibma *of Simcoe*, Joanne & Ross Little *of Florida*, Leo & Linda *of British Columbia*, Mary & Gary Gagnon *of Simcoe*, Ida & Bill Paton *of Waterford*, Betty & Mike Henderson *of Brampton*, and the late John (Jr.) & Linda May Fennema.
Loving grandmother of 21 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. Sister of Rita and John Beintema, the late Jeff Miedema (Jean) and siblings in the Netherlands.
Interment at Oakwood Cemetery, Simcoe.

---

On June 4, 2007,

**ELLA JOHANNA BOOD** (nee **Sellies**)

went to be with the Lord
after complications following surgery.

A charter member of the First Christian Reformed Church of Montreal, she was much loved by so many people. A memorial service celebrating Ella's life was held at the Church on Thursday, June 7, 2007. The Boods and their extended Cambodian family were deeply touched by the outpouring of condolences, warmth and love they received. Many tears were shed and laughter shared over the many reminiscences about Ella's life.

She is survived by her husband Klaas, daughter Marijke, sons, John, Tim and Daniel, numerous grandchildren and step-grandchildren, and her extended family from Cambodia, as well her brother Jan Sellies, his wife Annie and numerous nephews and nieces in the Netherlands. She will be greatly missed.

Thanks to all whose love and support made this difficult time more bearable.

Condolences may be sent to: Klaas W. Bood
2920 Rue du Cumberland
Saint Lazare Quebec J7T 2B1
Tel: (450) 458-7272
Email: kwbood@sympatico.ca

---

Munnekezijl, Friesland — Edmonton, AB
January 1, 1921 — May 28, 2007

In serenity, and with loved ones at his bedside,

**REV. JACOB BINNEMA SR.**

was permitted to claim his inheritance on the new earth, to join his Saviour and King.

He will be lovingly remembered by his wife of nearly 60 years: Hilda (nee Scholtens)

Loving father of:
Aukje W Kapteyn of *Lac La Biche, AB*
Jake & Magda Binnema of *Brownvale, AB*
Herma Dunnewold of *Tatamagouche, NS*
Hank Binnema & Marg Swytink of *Edmonton, AB*
Garry Binnema of *Calgary, AB*
Calvin & Wilma Binnema of *Edmonton, AB*
Ted & Helen Binnema of *Prince George, BC*
Tim & Christina Binnema of *Surrey, BC*

Opa for 23 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren

Brother of Harm, *Landsmeer, the Netherlands*
Predeceased by one sister and four brothers.

A service of celebration and consolation was held at Trinity CRC, Edmonton. His wife and three generations of children sang some of his favourite songs.

Correspondence can be sent to: Hilda Binnema
3632 – 130A Ave, Edmonton AB T5A 5A4

---

Andyk, Neth. — Smithers, B.C.
January 18, 1935 — May 25, 2007

After much suffering,
the Lord called home our dear sister-in-law

**IDA HUISMAN GROOT**

God was her refuge and strength (Ps. 46).
Predeceased by her husband A. H. Huisman.

| | |
|---|---|
| J. van der Schaaf † | K. Huisman † |
| G. van der Schaaf Huisman † | S. Huisman de Groot |
| R. Tigchelaar † | Y. Huisman † |
| J. Tigchelaar Huisman | A. Huisman Steeneveld |
| R. Huisman † | J. Hiemstra |
| B. Huisman Okkema | R. Hiemstra Huisman |
| O. Huisman † | W. Breeuwsma |
| R. Huisman Plantinga † | T. Breeuwsma Huisman |
| H. de Boer † | A. Huisman |
| S. de Boer Huisman | J. Huisman |
| | J. Huisman Groot |

*Correspondence:* J. Hiemstra, Box 92, Telkwa BC V0J 2X0

## Personal

Christian man looking for Christian woman (40-50 years old) for serious relationship.
Reply to: File # 2755
c/o Christian Courier
5 Joanna Drive
St Catharines ON L2N 1V1

## Accomodation Needed

**McMaster University** student looking for room near Mac with Christian female.
Contact Grace at hmvg@niagara.com

## Vacation

**Cochrane, Ont. Cozy cedar log cabin** for rent by the night or weekly. Living room, kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom with shower, etc.
Phone Ada Struyk at **705-272-6169**
or email cmstruyk@puc.net

**NETHERLANDS - B&B or heated wooden cabin** in Lippenhuizen, in the beautiful wooded area near Beetsterzwaag, or a restored nostalgic Frisian home in Oosterlittens, on waterways and near Sneek.
Both are in Friesland and fully furnished, sleep 4/5 persons and are self contained, with w/d.
Info at: utfanhus@planet.nl

## Job Opportunity

Elderly Caledonia, Ontario area woman requires a **live-in caregiver/companion**.
Please call 905-765-4630 for further information.

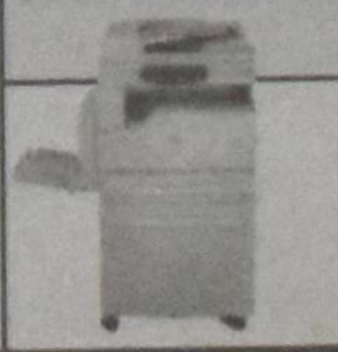
## For Rent

**Student accommodations** (bachelor apt) in **Guelph** 10 minutes from University. $475/month. Phone **519-767-1933**

Avail. **Beamsville**, Ont. **1 Br. apartment** in house, gr. level w/ lg. windows. Air and Utilities incl. 650.00 mth. hhultink@cogeco.ca
**905-563-3116**

**Beamsville, Ontario**
**House** for rent - 3+1 bedroom with spacious walk-out basement and attached garage. $1250./month + utilities. Newer, quiet subdivision, near QEW. C/A, washer & dryer, fridge & stove included. Some furniture can be supplied. No pets, no smoking. Call **905-630-5457**

## For Sale



**Photocopier** - good condition
-Contact Christian Courier at
**905-682-8311**

## Classifieds / Job Opportunities

**Cedarline Greenhouses**, an expanding greenhouse pepper operation at Dresden, located in Southwestern Ontario is accepting applications for an

**ASSISTANT GREENHOUSE GROWER**.

The successful applicant will demonstrate a strong work ethic, good labour management skills, and a desire to learn and hone their skills about plant production.

Past greenhouse experience would be an asset, but not necessary. If you are looking for an exciting career opportunity in a diverse agricultural industry, this may be the opportunity for you. Located near Reformed churches and Christian schools.

Please email resumes to gpdev@ciaccess.com

valentine
A division of Merit Vacations

**Fly to AMSTERDAM**

MARTINAIR LAST MINUTE SELL OFFS

*CALL FOR DETAILS*

JUNE AND SEPTEMBER MARTINAIR FLIGHTS

$732.00 - TAXES INCLUDED!!!!!!

**Mississauga 905-890-5333 or 1-800-268-6144**

**London 519-472-2700 or 1-800-265-1141**

*TICO Registration #4499356*

**Fred Hagen**

*Broker of Record*

FRED HAGEN Realty LTD., BROKERAGE

**905-388-9555**

Providing personal, professional real estate service in the Hamilton area for over 28 years.

Email: hagen@fredhagenrealty.com

www.fredhagenrealty.com

**LITTLE EUROPE RESORT AND TRAILER PARK**

**Bracebridge, Muskoka**

Plan a successful vacation at our resort known for it's Dutch Hospitality. Reasonable rates for **cottage rentals**. Excellent for **camping, swimming** and **fishing** (ideal for group camping). Showers available. "Little Europe" is located 10 km. east of Hwy 11 on Hwy 118 East, past the Muskoka Airport.

**Roel & Riet Bakema Phone: 705-645-2738**

**Little Europe Resort**

**1033 Ashley Lane, RR 3, Bracebridge ON P1L 1X1**

*No pets please*

**CRC EXTENSION FUND**

"...serving Christian Reformed churches and Christian schools since 1970"

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

***RATES TO June 30, 2007***

Ext. fund: we pay 4.5%

RRSP: you earn approx. 5.1%

**Write**: Christian Reformed Extension Fund
45 Harriet St, Toronto ON M4L 2G1

**Fax**: 416-465-6367 **Call: 416-461-1207**

**DEJONG ENTERPRISES INC.**

We are a progressive and medium sized transportation and customs brokerage company focused on providing excellent quality service for all of our customers. One key component of our business is the transportation of high-end furniture originating from various U.S. locations and delivered to Ontario and Quebec furniture retailers. We operate our own fleet of trucks and trailers. We are located about 20 minutes south of Woodstock, Ontario and have a number of Christian Schools and Reformed Churches within a half hour of our location.

We are looking to fill several positions within our company.

**Sales and Business Development Position**

To help us manage our existing customer relationships and to play a key role in new business development, we are looking for an experienced SALES REPRESENTATIVE to join our team.

You will be responsible for managing our existing clients relationships, contribute to the growth of our existing business lines and to develop new business opportunities in both Canada and the U.S. This is an exciting opportunity for someone seeking a fulfilling career with successful family-owned company. The ideal candidate will have experience in the furniture industry, however we will also consider individuals with proven sales experience. You will have excellent communication skills, have a high level of professional enthusiasm and enjoy working in a team environment.

**Licensed Truck Mechanic**

To help us maintain our fleet and to repair our vehicles we are looking for a LICENSED TRUCK MECHANIC to join our mechanic and maintenance team.

Together with our existing mechanic staff, you will be responsible for performing regular maintenance on our equipment and to perform required repairs. The position operates during the day shift with the expectation of being on call as needed. Our fleet is in excellent condition and consists mainly of newer Volvo tractors. This is an exciting opportunity for someone seeking a fulfilling career in a fleet environment.

The ideal candidate will have excellent communication skills, demonstrated skills and training as a licensed truck and coach mechanic, have a valid AZ driver license and enjoy working in a team environment.

Please forward your resume to:

De Jong Enterprises Inc.
Attention: Operations and Business Development
PO Box 39 RR3
Norwich ON N0J 1P0
Or forward to us by fax at 519-424-9331, or email to mvangurp@dejong.com

*Thank you for considering De Jong Enterprises Inc. While we appreciate your interest, only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.*

**Arie Hoogerbrugge**

*Associate Broker*

***RE/MAX Del Mar Realty Inc.***

860 Queenston Road
Stoney Creek, ON L8G 4A8
Bus: **905-662-5300**
Res: **905-945-3506**

**E-mail:**
**arie@remaxdelmar.com**
Website:
www.houseplus.com/ariehoogerbrugge

RE/MAX

See all the job opportunities recently advertised in CC on our website at www.christiancourier.ca

**REDEEMER University College**

**Put your investment to work for a wonderful Kingdom cause!**

Competitive Rates - 4.50% to 4.80%*

5 Year Term

Interest paid semi-annually

**For Information Call: 1-877-779-0913 ext. 4205**

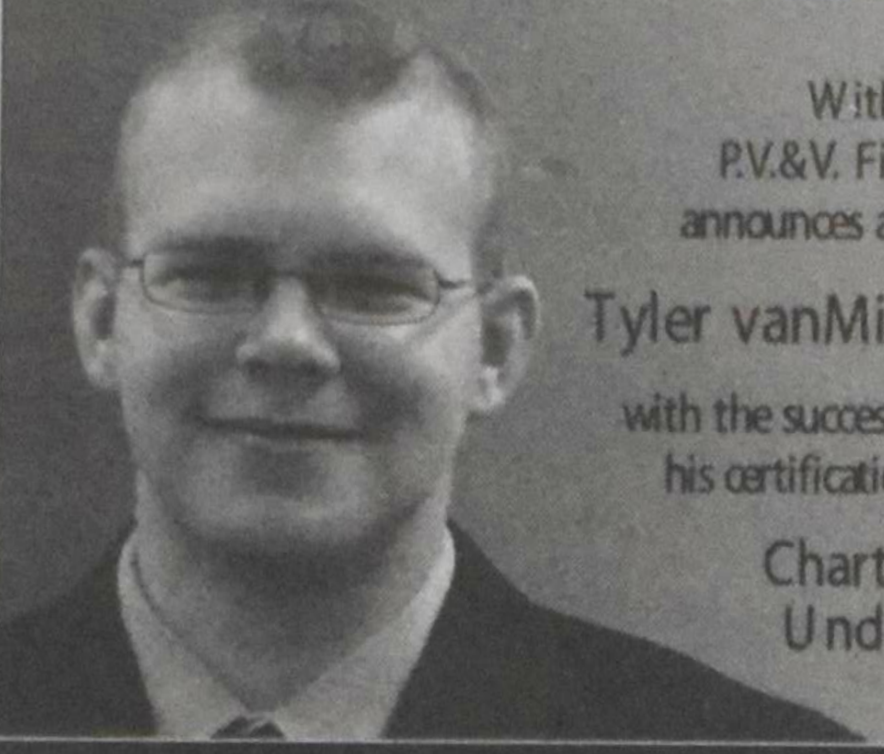
*Other rates apply for RRSP/RIF plans

777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4
www.redeemer.ca

Tel: 905-648-2131
Fax: 905-648-2134
stewardship@redeemer.ca

## Classifieds

**ANNOUNCEMENT**



With pleasure
P.V.&V. Financial Centre
announces and congratulates

Tyler vanMiddelkoop, CFP, CLU

with the successful completion and his certification by Advocis as a

Chartered Life Underwriter

Tyler specializes in all life insurance products and assisting in all areas of financial planning and wealth management. We invite you to call him for a free consultation.

P.V.&V. Financial Centre
905 632 0240
1 866 694 7276
www.pvv-insurance.com

# THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

**Radio- From Coast to Coast**

*3475 Mainway PO Box 5070 Stn LCD1 Burlington ON L7R 3Y8* Web: www.backtogod.net/

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **BRITISH COLUMBIA** | | |
| Burns Lake – CFLD | 9:15 am | 1400 |
| Osoyoos – CJOR | 8:00 am | 1490 |
| Prince George – CIRX | 7:00 am | 94.3 |
| Princeton – CHOR | 8:00 am | 1400 |
| Smithers – CFBV | 9:15 am | 1230 |
| Vernon – CJIB | 9:30 pm | 94 |
| **ALBERTA** | | |
| Brooks – CIBQ | 8:30 am | 1340 |
| Edmonton – CJCA | 6:00 pm | 930 |
| **MANITOBA** | | |
| Winnipeg – CKJS | 9:00 am | 810 |
| **ONTARIO** | | |
| Atikokan – CFAK | 9:30 am | 1240 |
| Chatham – CFCO | 6:30 am | 630 |
| Hamilton – CHAM | 7:30 am | 820 |
| London – CKSL | 7:00 am | 1410 |
| Owen Sound – CFOS | 7:00 am | 560 |
| Sarnia – CHOK | 7:30 am | 1070 |
| Stratford – CJCS | 8:45 am | 1240 |
| Wingham – CKNX | 10:30 am | 920 |
| Woodstock – CJFH | 7:30 am | 94.03 |
| **NEW BRUNSWICK** | | |
| Saint John – CHSJ | 9:00 am | 94.1 |
| **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND** | | |
| Charlottetown – CFCY | 7:00 am | 630 |
| **NOVA SCOTIA** | | |
| Digby – CKDY | 6:00 am | 1420 |
| Halifax – CFDR | 8:30 am | 780 |
| Liverpool – CKBW | 7:30 am | 94.5 |
| Kentville – CKEN | 8:30 am | 1490 |
| Middleton – CKAD | 8:30 am | 1350 |
| Shelburne – CKBW | 7:30 am | 93.1 |
| Sydney – CJCB | 7:00 am | 1270 |
| Weymouth – CKDY | 8:30 am | 103.1 |
| Windsor – CFAB | 8:30 am | 1450 |

**TELEVISION** - ***PRIMARY FOCUS***

**AB** Lethbridge – CJIL Thurs at 9 pm.
BC- OMNI - Sunday 4 pm
**TBN** (Trinity Broadcasting Network)

### Kids Corner Radio

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **ALBERTA** | | |
| Drayton Valley CIBW 92.9 FM | Sun. 8:30 am | |
| High River/Calgary CHRB 1140 AM | Sun. 4:30pm | |
| Nordegg CHBW 93.9 FM | Sun. 8:30 am | |
| Rocky Mtn.House CHBW 94.5 FM. | Sun. 8:30 am | |
| **BRITISH COLUMBIA** | | |
| Prince Rupert CIAJ 100.7 FM | Sat. 10 am | |
| **MANITOBA** | | |
| Steinbach CHSM 1250 AM | Sun. 4 pm | |
| **NOVA SCOTIA** | | |
| Bridgewater CKBW 1000 AM | Sun. 5:30 am | |
| **ONTARIO** | | |
| Oshawa CKDO 1350 AM | Sat. 8 am | |
| Woodstock CJFH 94.3 FM | Sat. 8 am | |
| **SASKATCHEWAN** | | |
| Estevan CJSL 1280 AM | Sun. 7 am | |
| Weyburn CJSL 1190 AM | Sun. 7 am | |

***Low interest rates getting you down?***

If you're over 65, have you considered a **charitable gift annuity**?

- Wonderful income - as high as 10%
- Largely tax exempt
- An charitable receipt for at least 20% of the annuity amount.
- This lasts as long as you live
- Worry free
- Benefits the charities of your choice

*Never heard of a gift annuity?* Call for a no-obligation quotation or have a child or grandchildren call on your behalf.

**LinkCharity** Canada Inc.
45 Harriet St. Toronto M4L 2G1
**Ph: 1-800-387-8146**
Fax: 416-465-6367
www.linkcharity.ca Email: info@linkcharity.ca

**ZINGEND GELOVEN** Saturdays at 8:00 AM AM 1320 & AM 710

# BUSINESS and SERVICE DIRECTORY

CALVIN
MINDS IN THE MAKING
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Michigan
1-800-688-0122
www.calvin.edu

Canadian Christian Business Federation (CCBF)
970 Bonnieview Ave
Burlington,
ON L7T 1T5
**Ph: 905-522-8602**
Fax 905-524-1203
**J Hans Vander Stoep** Executive Director
jvstoep@ccbf.org
CCBF activities listed on our Web-site
www.ccbf.org

**Ontario Plywood Specialties (1987) ltd**
- PLYWOOD
- PANELLING
- TRIM
- MOULDINGS
- DOORS

257 Cent. Pkwy N Hamilton, ON L8E 2X3
John Ouwehand • Syd Grypstra
**Ph: 905-561-3576** Fax: 905-561-3581

**DUTCH TOKO**
***European Imports***
118 Wyndham St. N. Guelph
**519-822-4690**
Mountain Plaza Mall, Hamilton
**905-383-2981**

**Hulse & English**
**Funeral Home**
75 Church St. St. Catharines
**905-684-6346** - 24 Hours
IAN H. RUSSELL
DAVID WALPOLE - Managing Director
*Serving the community for 151 years*

INSURANCE SOLUTIONS
**BARRY VAN ZOEREN,**
C.A.I.B.

**ALBERT VAN REEWYK INSURANCE BROKERS LTD**

409 Dundas St. W.
**Belleville,** ON K8P 1B6
**Ph: 613-968-4576**
Fax: 613-968-2356

499 Dundas St. W.
**Trenton,** ON K5V 6C4
**Ph: 613-965-1993**
Fax:613-965-1252

*Certified Management Accountant*
**GARY VAN EYK, CMA**
GVE
50 Lakeport Rd.
Ste 201
St. Catharines
ON L2N 4P7
Email: garyvaneyk@bellnet.ca
**Bus: 905-646-7331** Fx: 905-646-0951

**ADA REALTY LTD.**
***Sid Vandermeulen***
Suite 404, 2011-137 Ave.
Edmonton AB T5A 4W2
**Tel: 780-473-8149**

*RAMAKER'S IMPORTS INC.*
**We specialize in**
DUTCH FOOD / CHEESE / CHOCOLATE / TEXTILES & GIFTS
579 Ontario St.
St. Catharines
Ontario L2N 4N8
Fax: 905-934-3344
**Tel: 905-934-6454**
E-mail: linde_ramaker@cogeco.ca

**RESERVED FOR YOUR BUSINESS!!**
**Only $25.00. Run your ad monthly or perhaps every issue.**
**Check out our website:**
**www.christiancourier.ca**
**for issue dates and deadlines.**
**Call us at 905-682-8311 or**
**email: ads@christiancourier.ca**

## Events/Advertising

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**June 24** CRC of **Richmond**, BC will celebrate its 50th anniversary and closing. Please see ad this page for details.

**July 2** Frisian Picnic starting at 11 am. at Pinehurst Conservation Park, **Paris**, ON. See ad.

**July 22** Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Harry VanderWindt will be preaching.

**Sep 29** Netherlands Bazaar, **Thornhill** Community Centre. Details in following issues.

### FRISIAN PICNIC

**Monday**
**July 2, 2007**
**starting at 11 a.m.**

at Pinhurst Conservation Park,
Paris, Ontario
on Highway 24A
(4 miles north of Paris)

***Come and celebrate with us our 40th year!!***

ROSS & McBRIDE LLP
LAW FIRM

**DAVID A. VAN DER WOERD**

*Commerce Place, 1 King St. West*
**Mail:** P.O. Box 907
Hamilton, ON L8N 3P6

**Ph:** 905-526-9800
**Fax:** 905-526-0732
**Direct: 905-572-5803**
**Email:**
dvanderwoerd@rossmcbride.com

### Elim Investment Opportunities

ELIM Village

**Established by the Elim Housing Society** in 1995, Elim Village is located on 20 acres in the heart of Surrey's Fleetwood area. Based and operated on Christian principles, Elim's vision is to provide various levels of quality care for seniors.

Today, over 300 people call Elim home and are able to enjoy the benefits of living within a caring Christian retirement community. As part of Elim's ongoing successful financial strategy, we offer a variety of investment opportunities. Our rates are determined by the Royal Bank of Canada's prime rate.

Bonds

Shorter term investments are also available upon inquiry.

This is not to be construed as an offer to solicit investments and no investment can be made until the Investor has received an Information Statement issued by Elim Housing Society.

We currently offer Royal Bank of Canada's prime plus 1% (not to exceed 7%)

On May 15th, 2007, Elim Investments were accruing interest at 7%

For more information regarding investment with Elim Village, contact **Terry-Lynn Dryfhout** at **tld@elimvillage.com** or call **778.996.7755**
Visit our website at **www.ElimVillage.com**

*A Christian Retirement Community*

Tour the Journeys of
**"The Apostle Paul"**
and
**"The Seven Churches of Revelation"**
October 15, 2007
for 15 days
Call
Grace Visscher
Christian Guided Tours
**1-800-811-2388**

### A charitable gift annuity offers:

REDEEMER University College

- the peace of mind of a guaranteed lifetime income, largely tax free
- the satisfaction of knowing that you will be providing a future gift for Redeemer University College

Blended rate of 6 - 10% (capital returned & interest) for those over 65.
Please contact us for your own confidential, no-obligation quote.
Information available on other gift-planning options as well.

Christian Stewardship Services

**Redeemer University College** 777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario L9K 1J4
905-648-2139 ext. 4205 (Ben) stewardship@redeemer.on.ca

**Airfare / Cruises / All-Inclusives / Travel Insurance**

*- Call us for our European, Caribbean, Mexican and Hawaiian Air, Hotel & Cruise Specials -*

***'Best Fares to Amsterdam'***

**VISSCHER'S TRAVEL & CRUISE LTD.**
**Toll Free: 1-800-811-2388**

Tel: 604-530-6771
Website: www.visschertravelcruise.com
*"Give Us a Try Before You Buy for All Your Travel Needs"*
*BC Reg #25414*

### CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP BUS TOURS

**Quebec Gaspe Peninsula**
August 13-21
$1595 pp, dbl.
Historic Quebec City, St. Lawrence River, Fishing Villages, Lighthouses, Percé Rock, and much more.

Escorted scenic tour - daily devotions, sing-alongs. No Sunday travel.
Pickups in Niagara, Burlington, Yorkdale Shopping Centre.
Need a roommate? Ask us!
Call Mary of Verstraete Travel
at **905-988-3882**, or email uppercan@mergetel.com

### Midwives OF STONEY CREEK

**....We Deliver!**

- All pre and post-natal care fully funded
- Home and hospital births

phone: **905.546.5002** pager: 905.974.1838
38 King St. W, Stoney Creek, Ontario L8G 1H6
Email: midwivesofstoneycreek@bellnet.ca
*Website: www.themidwives.info*

***We're moving to:***
5 Joanna Drive
St. Catharines
ON L2N 1V1

### 50TH ANNIVERSARY AND CLOSING

The council of the Christian Reformed Church of **Richmond, British Columbia**, announces that our congregation will celebrate our **50th anniversary** at a special service at 10:00 am on the **24th** of **June 2007** in which we will be giving thanks to the Lord for his faithfulness to our community. This will also be our final service as congregation. As we close our doors with sadness, we gratefully hand over the keys to the Tapestry, a CRC church plant. They will continue to worship and minister in Richmond out of our present address. We invite all members, former members and friends to join us in this service as we focus on what the Lord has done among us over the last 50 years.

***Come let us worship together.***

EUROPE & WORLDWIDE
**DCA Travel & Cruise**
TORONTO: 416-224-5211
**1-800-667-2525**

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

***Call today for your***
**Health / Cancellation / Comprehensive Insurance**

CAR / HOTELS / PACKAGE TOURS

**AMSTERDAM**
**from**
**$551.00 CAD**
plus $78.00 taxes

**CRUISES**
ALASKA ...from CA 529.00*
CARIBBEAN ...from CA 529.00*
CANADA/NEW ENGLAND ...from CA 729.00*
*plus port taxes / govt. fees

This is your Travel Centre for all your Travel Needs!!!

News

# Gaza violence prompts call for outside help

**Escalated fighting between Fatah and Hamas leads to calls for the deployment of a multinational force to police the volatile territory.**

**Ilene R. Prusher and Joshua Mitnick**

Jerusalem and Tel Aviv – Palestinian factional fighting lurched dangerously closer to all-out civil war Tuesday as militants in Gaza linked to the opposing ideological camps, Fatah and Hamas, attacked one another's headquarters and drove internecine violence to unprecedented levels.

Following days of never-before-seen warfare between the two main Palestinian political spheres, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas called for a truce and said he was working with Egyptian mediators on a lasting cease-fire.

But truce after truce has been shot down in the months since the two sides reached the Mecca Accord, a power-sharing agreement brokered in Saudi Arabia in February that led to the first-ever Palestinian unity government.

The failure thus far to strike a peaceable deal between Fatah and Hamas is stirring fears that the situation is likely to deteriorate further and that international intervention may be Gaza's last hope for calm.

As the fighting escalates and innocent civilians seek to escape from the cross fire, Palestinians are holding fast to deeply divergent theories about what and who is fueling the conflict.

Tuesday, June 12, was one of the worst days of the fighting, with at least 17 Palestinians killed in 24 hours. Militants associated with Fatah attacked the home of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh for the second time in two days, while fighters loyal to Hamas seized several positions from their rivals, Fatah. Witnesses in Gaza said that Hamas forces had taken over parts of northern and central Gaza and declared them a closed military zone.

*Gaza checkpoint*

## Roots of discord

Painted in broad brush strokes, Fatah is a movement built on secular nationalist principles. Its leadership began a peace process with Israel in 1993 that was meant to lead to a two-state solution to the conflict. Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement that catapulted to power in January 2006 elections, remains firmly opposed to a peace deal with Israel on religious grounds.

And although many in the two camps hoped that these two dissimilar outlooks could be brought under one umbrella for the greater Palestinian good, that goal is being subsumed by ongoing struggle for military hegemony.

"From the beginning, this Mecca agreement did not satisfy everybody, and there were Hamas people who weren't happy with it, and to a certain extent this created two different views within Hamas," says Ghassan Khatib, a professor at Birzeit University in the West Bank and a former cabinet minister in the Palestinian Authority.

"Those who are involved in the government are relatively satisfied, and those who are in the fighting and the brigades are quite unhappy," says Dr. Khatib. "They started to feel that some kind of co-opting is happening within Hamas." In short, the willingness of Hamas politicians to work with Fatah and the office of Mr. Abbas, who is in turn cooperating with Israel and the US, is unacceptable to the armed groups affiliated with Hamas.

On the ground, that has translated into turf wars all over Gaza, made more complex by large, armed clans who have staked out certain fiefdoms. The Daghmash clan, the family holding BBC reporter Alan Johnston, exemplifies this issue.

Every move that Abbas and his Gazan security czar, Mohammed Dahlan, make to try to "reform" the security forces in Gaza is read by Hamas groups as an attempt to snatch a patch of what Hamas sees as its rightful turf, says Khatib.

"The activity of Abbas and Dahlan, the new training they're giving their forces – that all seems to be aimed at the Hamas brigades," Khatib adds. "Hamas had a sense of controlling the streets. They think that what Abbas and Dahlan are doing is undermining the Hamas plan."

In the eyes of Hamas officials, however, the implosion is a result of an "assault" on Hamas.

"Those who are allied under the command of Mr. Dahlan are committing a lot of crimes against our people, our soldiers, and our institutions, and this has really turned things upside down," says Atef Adwan, a Hamas member of the Palestinian legislative council, in a phone interview from his home in Gaza.

"They did not respect any truce we've reached so far, and so we're left with the conclusion that they're intending to topple the government," says Mr. Adwan. "Things have nearly reached an end by those who actually wanted to sabotage things. Those people will not respect any treaty, any truce, any law."

Adwan charged that this was happening with the encouragement of the US and Israel, since the two countries have been working to beef up the military capabilities of Abbas's Presidential Guard and other forces allied with Fatah.

"They are executing American and Israeli policies," he says, "because the weapons and money for Dahlan and the Presidential guard come from those two parties."

## International peacekeepers

The inability to reestablish a cease-fire has prompted a growing number of Palestinians – including Abbas – and Israelis to mull the deployment of international forces in Gaza. The key challenge, analysts explained, will be coming up with an intervention plan that's accepted by Fatah, Arab countries, Hamas, and Israel.

"Many sources are reaching this conclusion in the Arab world, and within the Palestinian Authority," says Khatib. "I don't see any way out without external intervention. If it's left to the rival factions, we only face a deepening circle of violence."

But the plan for a multinational force faces several hurdles, the first of which is resistance by Hamas, which sees foreign troops as a threat to its growing control over Gaza. "What do they want to do? How can they reestablish security?" Asks Fawzi Barhoum, a Hamas spokesperson in Gaza. "How do I know if they want to come here to protect one side?"

In addition it is unclear whether the Arab governments will want to send forces to jump in the middle of the Hamas, Fatah – and Israeli – melee.

"The question is do Arabs want to get involved, to what extent, and who are the Arabs who are willing to be involved," says Mohammed Dejani, a political scientist at Al Quds University. "It is not an easy task, and it is not a thankful task. They will be sacrificing, and they will be targeted, maybe not militarily but politically."

Dejani says that Palestinians are likely to consider a multinational force as simply a new form of foreign occupation. The peacekeepers, on the other hand, won't relish the idea of running down Kassam rocket launching teams or patrolling Gaza neighborhoods where fighting often flows from house to house.

On June 11, a group of left-wing Israeli lawmakers traveled to the West Bank city of Ramallah to discuss the idea of a peacekeeping force led by Jordanian and Egyptian forces. Abbas didn't reject the idea, but was noncommittal.

International peacekeepers are in Israel's interest because the internal Palestinian fighting spilled over the border last month, creating pressure on Israel's army to reenter Gaza to carry out retaliation strikes.

"If there is a force that will go in, stop the Kassams and create a different reality, how can Israel say no?" Asks Mr. Vilan.

During last month's escalation in Israeli-Palestinian cross-border attacks around Gaza, Israeli officials also expressed interest in an international force to deploy along the porous Gaza-Egyptian border to help stop weapon smuggling.

The international border team could be based partly on UNIFIL, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. The Lebanon peacekeepers have had mixed success from the Israeli perspective. On the one hand, it has kept Hizbullah forces from redeploying near the Israeli border in southern Lebanon, but it has not stopped the supply of arms from Syria over the western border with Lebanon, Israel has charged.

"We didn't leave Gaza to return, and yet there is a very real problem of smuggling," says one official. "The idea of having an international force on the border combined with an Egyptian force on their side of the border would prevent Israel from having to come back to Gaza."

KING'S CHRISTIAN COLLEGIATE
a Christian high school in Oakville, Ontario
having just completed its marvelous addition,
invites Christian school supporters to
participate in its

KING'S CHRISTIAN COLLEGIATE
SOLI DEO GLORIA

PROMISSORY NOTE PROGRAM

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| One year term | 5.5 % | per annum |
| Three year term | 6 % | per annum |
| Five year term | 6.5 % | per annum |

For detailed information or to express interest,
please contact either the Controller or the Treasurer:

Owen Palmateer
Controller
905-332-4278
opalmateer@sympatico.ca

Roy Sieben
Treasurer
905-632-5978 ext 313
rsieben@sbpartners.ca

www.kingschristian.net